

THE INDYPENDENT

Issue #167, July 6 – July 26, 2011

A FREE PAPER FOR FREE PEOPLE

WHAT REALLY SCARES LIBERALS

(Hint: It's Not
the Far Right)

Stanley Aronowitz,
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JULIELAQUER.COM



BLOOMBERGVILLE

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SPECIAL SECTION:
TAKE BACK THE CITY

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SECURE
COMMUNITIES

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The Indypendent is a New York-based free newspaper published 16 times a year on Wednesdays for our print and online readership of more than 200,000. It is produced by a network of volunteers who report, write, edit, draw, design, take photos, distribute, fundraise and provide website management. Since 2000, more than 650 journalists, artists and media activists have participated in this project. Winner of more than 50 New York Community Media Alliance awards, *The Indypendent* is funded by subscriptions, reader donations, grants, merchandise sales, benefits and advertising. We accept submissions that look at news and culture through a critical lens, exploring how systems of power — economic, political and social — affect the lives of people locally and globally. The Indypendent reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity.

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community calendar

SUBMIT YOUR EVENTS AT INDYEVENTS@GMAIL.COM.

WED JULY 6

7pm • Free
FILM: CLERMONT-FERRAND SHORT FILMS. Join Rooftop Films at the Socrates Sculpture Garden to watch a collection of new short films. All films are selected from the 2011 Clermont-Ferrand Short Film Festival and showcase work by various filmmakers.
3134 Vernon Blvd, Long Island City
718-417-7362 • rooftopfilms.com

FRI JULY 8

7pm • Free
ACTION: BROOKLYN CRITICAL MASS. Critical Mass is a bike ride that celebrates cyclists and other forms of non-polluting transportation. It also allows cyclists and pedestrians to assert their rights to the streets by being part of traffic.
Grand Army Plaza, Union St and Eastern Pkwy, Brooklyn
212-802-8222 • times-up.org

SAT JULY 9

10am • Free
EVENT: VACANT PROPERTY COUNT. Come out and help Picture the Homeless continue their citywide count of vacant properties. Registration via phone required to participate.
100 Central Avenue, Staten Island
1637 Central Avenue, Queens
646-314-6423 • picturethehomeless.org

SUN JULY 10

9am • Free
ACTIVITY: TOUR DE QUEENS. Claim public space for cyclists and raise your biking awareness in a leisurely paced 20-mile bike ride through Queens. Sponsored by Transportation Alternatives. Registration required.
Flushing Meadows Park by the Queens Museum of Art
212-629-8080 • tourdequeens.org

11am-1pm • \$5

ACTIVITY: OUTDOOR COMPOSTING WORKSHOP. Come to the Pleasant Village Community Garden to learn the basics of compost maintenance. Outdoor compost bins will be available for purchase at a reduced price. Registration required on the Lower East Side Ecology Center website.
342 Pleasant Ave
212-477-4022 • lesecologycenter.org

THU JULY 14

4-8pm • Free
EXHIBIT: (S) FILES 2011 AT TIMES SQUARE ALLIANCE. As part of El Museo de Barrio's sixth biennial, various (S) Files artists will be performing art and installing sculptures that celebrate the importance of public space and how it defines New York City. Featured artists include Irvin Morazan, Nicoykatiushka and Ryan Roa.
Duffy Square, Broadway and 46th St
212-831-7272 • elmuseo.org

SAT JULY 16

11:30am-1pm • Free
ACTION: EL BARRIO TODAY WALKING TOUR. Explore the culture of El Barrio with El Barrio Today Arts Cluster on this walking tour, which includes the Graffiti Wall of Fame, Julia de Burgos Boulevard and local murals. The tour will start at El Museo del Barrio's lobby and will occur every Saturday.
El Museo del Barrio, 1230 Fifth Avenue
212-831-7272 • elmuseo.org

12-4pm • Free

EVENT: BIKE BONANZA. Recycle-A-Bicycle's Bike Bonanza at Red Hook Recreation Area features free, fun activities for the whole family, including a Learn to Ride class for kids, free helmets and bike registration.
Bay St and Henry St, Brooklyn
718-858-2972 • recycleabicycle.com

THU JULY 21

2pm • Free
LECTURE: FAIR HOUSING LAW: A QUESTION AND ANSWER WORKSHOP. The New York City Commission on Human Rights will discuss fair housing laws and tenants' rights to accessibility and reasonable accommodations.
St. George Library Center, 5 Central Avenue, Staten Island
718-442-8562 • nypl.org

SUN JULY 24

3pm • Free
CELEBRATION: OUTDOOR HARLEM PARKS MUSIC AND SCREENING SERIES. Maysles Institute and Sundae Sermon present a free day of music from four DJs and a screening of *Maestro* at 8:15 pm. The film details the start of New York City's underground dance scene in the 1970s.
Morningside Park, Morningside Dr and W 114th St
212-582-6050 • mayslesinstitute.org

WHERE DO I GET MY COPY OF THE INDYPENDENT ?

BELOW 14TH ST.

WBAI - 99.5FM
120 Wall St., 10th floor

DC 37 Headquarters
125 Barclay St.

Bluestockings
172 Allen St.

Housing Works
126 Crosby St.

Hudson Park Branch Library
66 Leroy St.

Mercer St. Books
206 Mercer St.

Whole Earth Bakery
130 St. Marks Place

Brecht Forum
451 West St.

4th Street Food Co-op
58 E. 4th St.

Theater for the New City
155 First Ave.

14TH TO 96TH ST.

New York Public Library
Epiphany Branch
228 E. 23rd St.

Chelsea Square Restaurant
W. 23rd St. & 9th Ave.

Manhattan Neighborhood Network
537 W. 59th St.

New York Public Library
Muhlenberg Branch
209 W. 23rd St.

St. Agnes Branch Library
444 Amsterdam Ave. (btwn W. 81st and 82nd Sts.)

ABOVE 96TH ST.

New York Public Library
George Bruce Branch
518 W. 125th St.

Book Culture
526 W. 112th St.

New York Public Library
Harlem Branch
9 W. 124th St.

New York Public Library
Hamilton Grange Branch
503 W. 145th St.

Uptown Sister's Books
W. 156 St. & Amsterdam

Bloomingdale Branch
Library
150 W. 100th St.

BROOKLYN

Brooklyn Museum
200 Eastern Pkwy.

BAM
30 Lafayette Ave.

Tillie's of Brooklyn
248 DeKalb Ave.

Tea Lounge
Union St. & Seventh Ave.

Video Gallery
310 Seventh Ave.

Ozzie's Coffee Shop
249 5th Ave.
57 Seventh Ave.

Verb Café
Bedford Ave. & N. 5th St.

Pillow Café
505 Myrtle Ave.

Sisters Community Hardware
900 Fulton St.

Brooklyn Public Library
Pacific Street Branch
25 Fourth Ave.

K-Dog & Dune Buggy
43 Lincoln Rd.

Outpost Café
1014 Fulton St.

Blackbird Café
197 Bedford Ave.

'sNice Café
315 Fifth Ave.

Purity Diner
43 Underhill Ave.

Brooklyn Public Library
Bedford Branch
496 Franklin St.

Parkside Deli
203 Parkside Ave.

BRONX

Brook Park
141st St. & Brook Ave.

The Point
940 Garrison Ave.

New York Public Library
Mott Haven Library
321 E. 140th St.

STATEN ISLAND

St. George Library
5 Central Ave.

Port Richmond Branch
Library
75 Bennett St.

Dot Com Café
36 Bay St.

Everything Goes Book Café
208 Bay St.

UPCOMING EVENTS

THU, JULY 14-SUN, JULY 17 • VARIOUS TIMES

SEMINAR: THEY SAY AUSTERITY, WE SAY SOLIDARITY!: 33RD ANNUAL INTENSIVE INTRODUCTION TO MARXISM.

The Brecht Forum's annual Summer Intensive is designed as an introduction to the theoretical and practical traditions that trace their origins to the works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. Through lectures, readings and lively discussion, in an adamantly open-minded environment, participants will be introduced to Marx's revolutionary critique of capitalism and discover tools of analysis that can help us think more strategically and act more effectively.
Sliding scale: \$60-\$90

THU JULY 21 • 7:30-9:30PM

Do you write poetry? Would you be interested in feedback from other socially-conscious poets about your work? Join us for this monthly workshop that meets every third Thursday of the month. For more information, email steve@stevebloompoeetry.net
Sliding scale: \$6/\$10/\$15

THE BRECHT FORUM

BUILDING
A MOVEMENT
THAT MOVES

451 West Street
(btwn Bank and Bethune)

PLEASE REGISTER ONLINE:
brechtforum.org
212-242-4201

WED JULY 27

7-9pm • Free
EXHIBIT: SCENE(SEEN)/HERE(HEAR): MUSIC. Come to the BRIC Rotunda gallery for this exhibit that re-imagines individuals' relationship to space, sound, thought and time. Curated by Christian Fuller and featuring the music of La Big Vic and wish and the video art of Jon William and Rebecca Gaffney.
33 Clinton Street, Brooklyn
718-683-5600 • bricartsmedia.org

THU JULY 28

5-8pm • Free
CELEBRATION: FIERCE ARTISTIC NIGHT. LGBT youth will showcase their talents in dance, poetry, art, music, drag and other performances.
Hudson River Park,
Christopher Street Pier 45
646-336-6789 • fiercenyc.org

SUN JULY 31

12-7pm • Free
FAIR & PICNIC: 21ST ANNUAL LGBT DOMINICAN/LATINO HEALTH FAIR PICNIC. This annual health fair hosted Gay and Lesbian Dominican Empowerment will feature rapid HIV testing, free condoms and information about health services and issues. There will also be food, music and other entertainment.
Inwood Hill Park, Broadway and Isham St.
212-584-9311 • leshrc.org

FOR MORE IDEAS ON WAYS TO RECLAIM PUBLIC SPACE, SEE OUR TAKE BACK THE CITY GUIDE ON PAGES 7-18.

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A FREE PAPER FOR FREE PEOPLE

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TENANTS DENIED

BY STEVEN WISHNIA

New York State's rent laws have been renewed — with only token improvements.

More than a week after the laws expired on June 15, the “three men in a room” — Gov. Andrew Cuomo, state Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos, and Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver — agreed to extend them for four years.

The bill raises the rent at which vacant apartments are deregulated from \$2,000 to \$2,500 a month. It also increases the income level at which occupied apartments that cost that much can be deregulated, from \$175,000 a year to \$200,000. And in buildings with 35 or more units, it lowers the amount that landlords can raise monthly rents for renovations, from 1/40th of the cost of the work to 1/60th.

Tenant activists call that grossly inadequate. They had demanded that Albany repeal the 1997 vacancy-decontrol law, put buildings that leave the Mitchell-Lama or Section 8 programs into rent stabilization, and give New York City the right to enact stronger rent laws on its own.

“The bill we got is not what we’ve been fighting for by any means,” says Mario Mazzoni of the Metropolitan Council on Housing. “The best thing you can say is we didn’t lose anything this year.”

Tenant activists campaigned hard to strengthen the laws, staging rallies all over the city, picketing Cuomo’s Manhattan office, and sending busloads of protesters to Albany. On June 13, as 400 demonstrators packed the hallways of the state capitol, 12 people were arrested in a sit-in outside the governor’s office.

One victory that campaign won, they say, was preventing the Legislature from overturning the 2009 state court decision that barred landlords who take tax breaks for renovating rent-stabilized buildings from deregulating apartments in them. That ruling reversed deregulation in Stuyvesant

Town/Peter Cooper Village and prevented it for thousands of other apartments. The state Senate, urged on by the real estate lobby, had passed such a bill.

Without the repeal of vacancy decontrol, though, the changes in the law are “not going to stop the hemorrhage of affordable apartments,” says Mary Tek, campaign manager for the Real Rent Reform Campaign, a coalition of housing and community groups.

The state’s rent-stabilization and rent-control laws now protect about 1 million apartments from massive rent increases and evictions without cause. Since 1997, however, about 300,000 apartments have been deregulated. Many of those deregulations were fraudulent, but state enforcement of the laws against illegal rent increases ranges from glacially slow to nonexistent.

Yet the tenant campaign faced long odds in Albany. According to Common Cause, the top 120 real-estate individuals and organizations in the city donated \$9.7 million to state and local campaigns in 2009-10, almost twice what they’d given in 2007-08. After the Republicans retook the state Senate last November, Rent Stabilization Association head Joe Strasburg boasted that the landlord lobby had “basically emptied our piggy banks” to win that result—and that they expected a return on their investment. The Senate refused for months to pass anything other than a simple extension of the rent laws.

Gov. Cuomo got \$1.3 million of that money. (His Republican opponent got \$250.) He promised several times to “strengthen” the laws, but was far less passionate about it than he’s been about reducing state workers’ pensions or raising state-university tuition. He failed to demand that reforming the rent laws be included in the state budget in March, when he would have had more leverage over the Senate Republicans. He never endorsed repealing vacancy decontrol.

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Bloombergville Bash



JOSEPH KOLKER

HELLO, NEIGHBOR: Bloombergville participants march around the perimeter of City Hall Park. Established near City Hall on June 14, Bloombergville served as an around-the-clock protest encampment to mobilize opposition to the mayor’s proposed budget cuts.

BY JOHN TARLETON

The Mayor and City Council had unexpected company during the final two weeks of June as they contemplated budget cuts to a number of vital city services and programs.

Across the street from City Hall Park, a makeshift, around-the-clock encampment of dozens of protesters took root at the corner of Broadway and Park Place. Sheltered by both scaffolding attached to the Woolworth Building and court rulings that have affirmed sleeping outside as a constitutionally protected form of protest, the residents of “Bloombergville” resorted to making a home on 900 square feet of Lower Manhattan sidewalk.

“That’s New York,” said Larry Hales, an unemployed college graduate. “If you are a Wall Street banker, you have access to Bloomberg whenever you need it. But if you are from the boroughs and you are a worker or a student or a teacher, you can’t even get to the steps of City Hall.”

Part protest base camp/part community center, Bloombergville reclaimed public space for dissent in a way that has not occurred in New York since 9/11. It also created a common ground for a variety of left groups and tendencies to work together in a way also rarely seen in this city.

Operating under the banner of New Yorkers Against Budget Cuts, the majority of the protesters, like Hales, were in their 20s and 30s, face a future of limited job prospects and see a political system disconnected from the concerns of ordinary people. They drew inspiration from mass occupations of public space that have recently propelled protest movements from Egypt to Spain to Madison, Wisconsin as well as from the “Hoover-villes” of the 1930s.

Bloombergville organized daily protests of as many as 200 people. These actions culminated in a raucous June 28 demonstration in which 13 people were arrested for barricading the entrance to the office building at 250 Broadway. City Council members, who have offices in the building, were inside negotiating the final details of the budget. A near-riot ensued when police attacked protesters who had surrounded and briefly blocked the two police vans called

to carry away the arrestees.

Organized through a general assembly that met each night at 8 p.m., Bloombergville also served as the movement’s living room. People could drop in and share donated food and drink, debate politics for hours, take out books from the “Bloombergville Library,” attend evening teach-ins at “Bloombergville University” led by City University of New York (CUNY) professors such as Frances Fox Piven and Stanley Aronowitz or take the stage during open-mic night.

“It was like you were inviting people into your home,” said Jacqueline DiSalvo, 68, a retired CUNY professor. Yotam Marom, a Bloombergville organizer, estimated 2,000 people participated in the encampment in some way over the course of its existence.

Bloombergville participants also ranged far away from their home base, engaging in activities such as wearing sandwich boards in Union Square on which they invited people to write their thoughts about Bloomberg’s proposed budget cuts and putting on anti-budget cuts performances in the subways while passing out informational fliers.

“People respond when somebody explains in a friendly and creative way what is going on,” Marom said.

Bloombergville marked the arrival of an innovative protest tactic in New York that will likely be refined and used again in the future. Still, it never came close to attaining the mass participation organizers had initially hoped for and was largely a side-show to final budget negotiations between the Mayor and City Council that produced a deal which is expected to lead to the lay-off of 1,200 city workers, larger school class sizes and cuts in funding for city libraries and scholarship money for CUNY students.

As *The Independent* goes to press, Bloombergville participants have just begun to discuss how to move forward to create a much larger movement that can pose a serious challenge to the politics of austerity in New York City, which require the poor and the working class to sacrifice while the wealthy remain untouched.

Some suggest creating public spaces that offer basic services like free books or ESL

Continued on page 5

UPDATING A CLASSIC



ARI MINTZ

BROOKLYN IN THE SPOTLIGHT: Members of Families United for Racial and Economic Equality (FUREE) and The Foundry Theatre recently teamed up to perform *FUREE in Pins & Needles*, pictured above. The musical is a Brooklyn-based adaptation of the historic musical revue *Pins & Needles*, which ran on Broadway from 1937 to 1941 and spoke out for the disenfranchised and satirized right-wing politicians.

Correction: The illustration credit for “Palestinians in America: An Intelligent Socialist’s Guide to Tony Kushner,” in the June 8 issue, misspelled the name of the illustrator as Elena Bakaitis instead of Elvis Bakaitis.

Secure Communities on ICE

IMMIGRANTS BREATHE A SIGH OF RELIEF AS CUOMO SUSPENDS CONTROVERSIAL PROGRAM

BY RENÉE FELTZ AND STOKELY BAKSH

Last month New York immigrants and their allies breathed a sigh of relief when Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced that the state would no longer participate in the controversial Secure Communities program that lets federal agents know when city and state police arrest an immigrant who is eligible for deportation.

In a letter to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Cuomo noted his administration had “received numerous complaints and questions about the purpose and implementation” of the program and said his greatest concern is that instead of targeting dangerous criminals it is “compromising public safety by deterring witnesses to crime and others from working with law enforcement.”

“We are very glad Governor Cuomo suspended it,” said Omar Angel Perez, Executive Director of the Workplace Project/Centro de Derechos Laborales, which aids immigrant workers in Long Island. They were one of the first worker centers specifically for Latino workers in the United States.

Cuomo’s action followed more than a year of campaigning and signature-gathering by advocates calling on the state to suspend the controversial program. It was hailed by many as a victory for immigrant rights.

The suspension was supposed to deactivate Secure Communities in as many as 24 New York counties that had enrolled. But two days after its announcement, long-time immigration enforcement advocate, Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy, said police there will continue to participate anyway. It is unclear how Levy can override Cuomo’s deactivation of the program.

That worries Perez, who says he needs workers to file reports against employers who don’t pay them in order for him to help them fight wage theft and other workplace abuses.

“The impact of Secure Communities is that workers are afraid to report crimes,” says Perez.

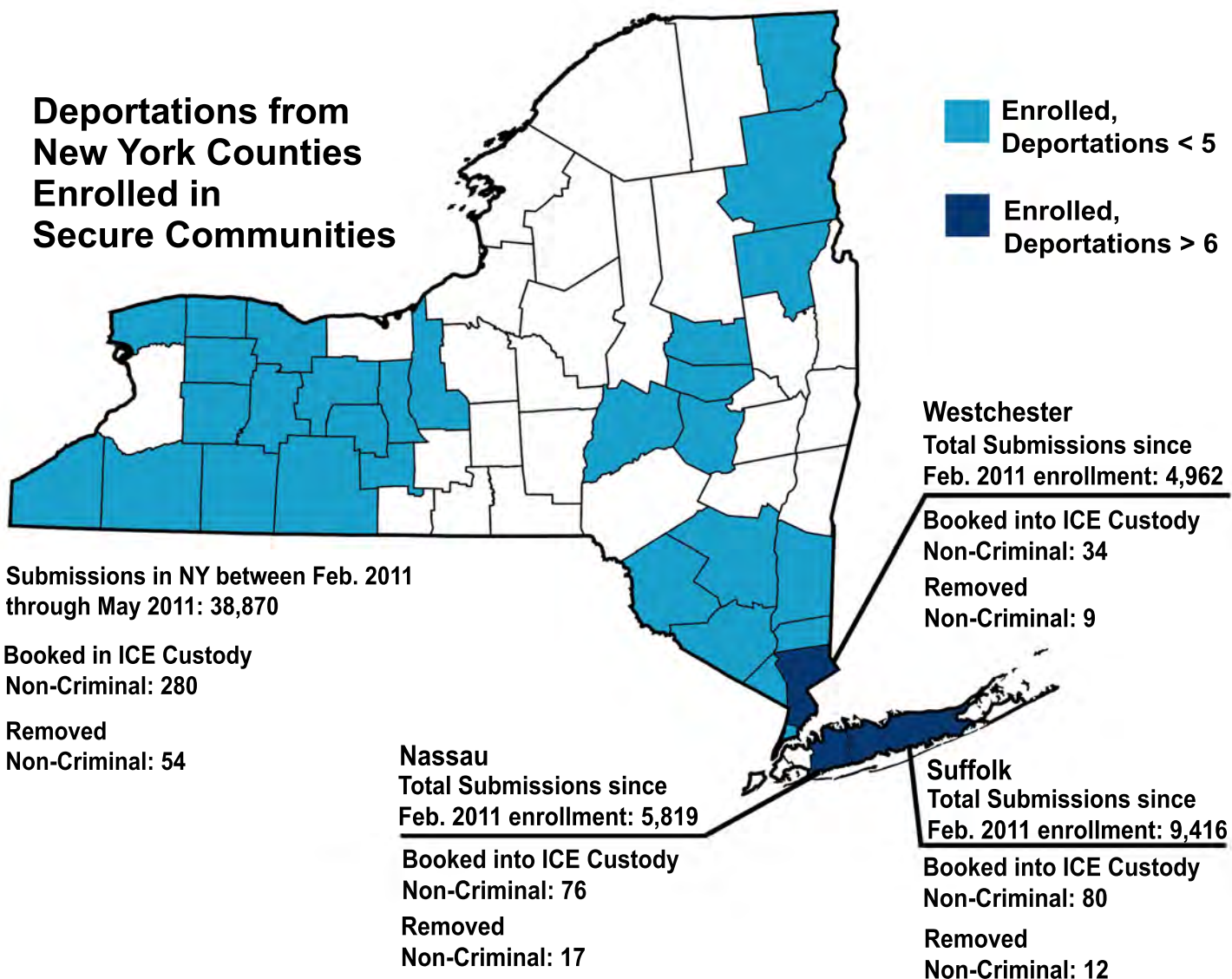
Ten people were deported from Suffolk County since it joined the program in February, according to ICE records. Nine of them had no criminal record despite Secure Communities’ mandate to focus on people who pose a threat to public safety. This reflects the same pattern seen around the country. ICE maintains that it will deport anyone deemed eligible for removal once they are identified.

Nationwide, about 109,000 people have been deported after ICE took them into custody through Secure Communities. Out of those, ICE reported 60 percent were non-criminals or low-level offenders, while about 26 percent were charged with dangerous felonies. More than 70 percent of states and local law enforcement agencies are enrolled in the program - about 1,250 jurisdictions in 42 states.

NYC ENFORCEMENT

New York City and more than half of the

Deportations from New York Counties Enrolled in Secure Communities



Source: Immigration Customs and Enforcement. IDENT/IAFIS Interoperability Report, Feb. 2011 - May 31, 2011.

DEPORTATION NATION.ORG

state’s 62 counties have declined to enroll in Secure Communities.

Last December, NYPD Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly raised his concerns with the program when advocates were organizing for the city to oppose joining after then Gov. Paterson activated it.

“We want people to feel free to contact the police, to walk into police stations; communicate with the police,” said Kelly. “To the extent that [Secure Communities] may have some effect on that, that’s problematic.”

Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez (D-NY) said Cuomo did “the right thing” when he suspended the program. Her district includes parts of Brooklyn, Queens and Manhattan that have large immigrant communities such as Bushwick, Sunset Park and Chinatown. Velázquez was also part of a group of advocates who pressured Cuomo to withdraw from the program.

But some advocates want the city to go further. They note that the five boroughs and other cities have long collaborated with ICE through the Criminal Alien Program (CAP), which transfers immigrants held at Rikers Island jail into ICE custody. This led

to the deportation of about 3,200 immigrants last year.

“People already feel afraid in certain precincts that are more aggressive in threatening people with deportation,” said Mizue Aizeki, with the Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights. “In some parts of Queens police say ‘I’ll throw you in jail and ICE is going to get you,’” Aizeki said she heard from immigrants she works with.

CAP is a national program available at all state and federal prisons, as well as city jails. ICE does not make public the number of state or cities participating at a national level. Participation in CAP is voluntary, according to New York City Department of Corrections director Dora B. Schiro. In a City Council hearing last November she said the city had no formal agreement with ICE.

ICE ANNOUNCES REFORM

Two weeks after New York joined Illinois and Massachusetts in rejecting Secure Communities, ICE announced a set of reforms aimed at appeasing its critics.

“We’ve listened to what people said, con-

cerns various state and community officials have raised, and we’re trying to address those head on,” said ICE Director John Morton.

One of the reforms gave ICE attorneys in immigration court the discretion to cancel a detainer — the tool used to request that local jails transfer an immigrant to ICE custody.

Morton also said ICE would no longer begin deportation proceedings against victims and witnesses of crimes, with a special emphasis on domestic violence victims.

But immigrant advocates like Aizeki said the reforms amounted to “superficial changes” and said they were disappointed that ICE did not issue a moratorium on Secure Communities.

“It’s an opportunity for them to seem like they’re doing something when they’re really not,” said Aizeki.

Renée Feltz and Stokely Baksh report on Secure Communities and immigration enforcement for DeportationNation.org, which features original stories, interactive timelines, videos and a library of resources.



JESSPATRICK.COM

BY JOHN TARLETON

New York City-based Democrats in the State Assembly wanted to strengthen rent laws. Republicans in the State Senate sought a property tax cap for the rural and suburban districts where they hold sway.

The deal the two parties reached before the Legislature adjourned at the end of June seemed straightforward — provide relief for the 2.5 million New York City residents who still live in rent-stabilized apartments and let upstate screw itself. “We’re trading one good piece of legislation for one horrible piece of legislation,” a State Assemblymember from Brooklyn told me.

If only it were that simple.

Setting the Stage for Fiscal Crisis

While the rent law reforms turned out to be wholly inadequate (See “Tenant Denied,” page 3), the other half of this bargain — the property tax cap — will be profoundly damaging, but *not only* to the upstate communities that will find themselves starved for revenues to fund their schools and other essential public services.

The tax cap approved by the Legislature calls for property tax levies to increase by no more than 2 percent a year or the rate of inflation, whichever is lower. The bill allows for a local override with 60 percent of a municipal board vote or, for school districts, 60 percent of a public vote. It is set to expire in 2016 when it will come up for renewal in the Legislature. New York City, which funds its schools with income tax revenues, is not covered by it.

J. Patrick

‘INVITATION TO DISASTER’

In an editorial, the *New York Times* called the property tax cap “an invitation to disaster,” noting that California set down a similar path beginning in the late 1970s under Proposition 13. Once a national leader in public education, California now rates near the bottom of the 50 states in both spending per pupil and achievement in grades K-12, below perennial bottom dwellers like South Carolina and Alabama.

The Fiscal Policy Institute and other progressive groups called for targeted property tax relief to assist those who need it most — home-owning households that earn less than \$100,000 per year and pay 10 percent or more of their annual income in property taxes. But this was never seriously considered by Gov. Andrew Cuomo, Senate

Majority Leader Dean Skelos (R-Nassau County), or Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver (D-Manhattan). Instead, local governments will be left to grapple with mandated expenses that are increasing at a faster clip than a “hard” 2 percent cap can accommodate.

How will local upstate governments respond? Like New York City, they are already facing deep cuts in State aid in 2012 and beyond, so their choices will be stark. One possibility is to go to battle in Albany for a larger share of a shrinking pie.

New York City already sends more money to Albany than it gets back. Given Republican control of the State Senate and Cuomo’s indifference to the economic concerns of his New York City-based constituents (whose loyalty to the Democratic Party he can take for granted), it’s not hard to imagine upstate gaining a larger slice of State aid at the city’s expense.

The impact of the property tax cap will also create an opening to go after New York’s 1.1 million unionized public sector workers and their collective bargaining rights, in particular the Triborough Amendment.

TRIBOROUGH EXPLAINED

Reviled by conservatives, Triborough prohibits a public employer from altering any provision of an expired labor agreement until a new agreement is reached. It was enacted in 1982 to level the playing field in collective bargaining. Before Triborough, many employers took advantage of a ban on strikes by public workers in New York State to refuse to negotiate in good faith, leaving workers to watch helplessly as hard-won rights and protections expired with their contracts.

Public employees in the state of New York can go years without receiving a pay raise if contract talks stall. However, they can-

not have concessions unilaterally imposed on them. Sweep away Triborough and cash-strapped local governments would be free to dramatically alter the terms and conditions of the employment of their workers once existing contracts expire.

Right-wing groups like the Manhattan Institute and New Yorkers for Growth favor repealing Triborough, as does the New York Conference of Mayors and a number of Republicans in the State Legislature.

“It would be devastating,” said a union official who visits Albany regularly to lobby members of both parties. “All the provisions that protect members would not be there. Everything would start from scratch.”

MIXED SIGNALS

To date, the Cuomo administration has sent mixed signals on Triborough. In January, Larry Schwartz, a senior adviser to Cuomo, floated the idea of “freezing” Triborough for an unspecified number of years. After an outcry from unions, the Cuomo administration backedpedaled. The mass protests of Wisconsin state workers that took off several weeks later didn’t hurt either.

Led by its public sector unions, New York has the largest concentration of unionized workers of any state in the country. An attack on Triborough would spark a furious response from union leaders who would turn to their Democratic Party allies for support, especially in the State Assembly. But, would that be enough?

Recent moves against public employee bargaining rights by Democratic legislators in New Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Illinois suggest the Democrats are not to be trusted. Here in New York, if you are a public sector employee, do you bank on Shelly Silver and the Assembly Democrats as your last, best hope? If so, ask tenant advocates what that gets you.

Tenants

Continued from page 3

“On economic issues, Cuomo’s no different than a Republican,” says Mario Mazzoni. “The cards were really stacked against us.”

If the political environment in Albany is so hostile, than what can the tenant movement do? It needs to be much bigger and more militant, housing activists say.

“The biggest thing is messaging,” says Mary Tek. The movement has to correct the “misconceptions about rent regulation, that it’s a handout, that it’s the state subsidizing tenants. In the middle of an extreme housing crisis, it’s about leveling the playing field and giving tenants rights.” It also, she adds, has to go beyond defending the 2.5 million people who live in rent-regulated apartments and campaign to get all tenants protected.

Helping the Democrats regain control of the Senate is important too, she says, but “we can’t put all our eggs in that basket.”

“We need more of an outside strategy,” says Mazzoni. “We were pursuing primarily an insider strategy, but we’re not on the inside.” That, he says, means “more aggressive protests, not just nudging elected officials.”

The movement also has to engage non-regulated tenants, he says. The real-estate lobby’s strategy, he explains, is “out of the playbook to abolish pensions and destroy unions.” By denying economic rights to



RENTERS UNITE: Tenants packed the state capitol June 13 to demand stronger rent laws. This group came from Mirabal Sisters, a West Harlem community group.

people who didn’t already have them, vacancy decontrol has created a class of mostly younger tenants who pay high market-rate rents, who can be manipulated to resent people who pay less.

“The movement needs to include people who aren’t protected,” he says. “We should start calling for expanding rights.”

“Direct action needs to be on the table,” says Andres Mario Mures, an organizer with the Mirabal Sisters community group in West Harlem.

In the Depression, he says, there was a major rent strike in the Bronx. When people were evicted, their neighbors and unemployed councils would either block the eviction or carry their possessions back into the apartment.

The movement also needs to unify across ethnic, language, and class lines, he says, as it’s often perceived as centered among rent-stabilized white tenants in Manhattan. That has improved this year; the Albany protests were conducted in English and Spanish, and some in Queens added Chinese and Bengali.

He doesn’t know how much organizers can do, other than keep working and explaining to people that they can do something.

“People are going to start to feel the pinch,” he says. “When you least expect it, people can become radicalized.”

Bloombergville

Continued from page 3

classes as a starting point for initiating political discussion with individuals who are apolitical but have an inchoate class anger. Others urge base-building through outreach to community groups already fighting austerity measures in their communities.

“We need to build up our forces so that we can have the kind of mass presence we hoped for this time,” said Courtney Cennane of New Yorkers Against Budget Cuts (NYABC).

In the weeks before Bloombergville was launched on June 14, “action assemblies” were held in the South Bronx, Jackson Heights, Queens and on Staten Island. The forums featured organizers from a variety of groups speaking on the impact of austerity measures in their communities. Audience members were also given a chance to speak about their experiences. Flyering was done in advance in nearby schools, subways and stores in order to broaden turnout.

With organizers no longer tied down to Bloombergville, Cennane hopes NYABC will hold more forums, make more connections to community-based groups fighting austerity measures and develop borough chapters.

“All these problems come from one root,” Cennane told *The Independent*. “Having an organization that is looking at the larger picture is really important.”

For more information, see bloombergville-now.org.

LGBT CENTER BARS PRO-PALESTINE GROUPS

BY ALEX KANE

When the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center, located on West 13th Street in Greenwich Village, imposed an “indefinite moratorium” early last month on pro-Palestinian groups using their meeting spaces, the center’s leadership hoped to put the controversy over Palestine solidarity organizing there to rest. Instead, the center has stirred up a hornet’s nest of radical queer activists and their allies who are calling attention to the moratorium and demanding that it be reversed.

Two newly formed groups, Queers Against Israeli Apartheid (QAIA) and Queers for an Open LGBT Center (QFOLC), are turning up the heat on the Chelsea-area center, making New York the latest battleground over Israel within LGBT communities.

Demonstrations, sit-ins and pickets have greeted the LGBT Center in recent weeks.

Queer Palestine solidarity activists are angry at what they call “censorship” at a community center that has caved to Zionist donor pressure. Activists also say that the center’s response to their protests has disappointed them. For example, activists say the LGBT Center hired private guards in response to a March protest.

“The center [leadership has] betrayed the mission of the center. They have turned their backs on the community that they claim to serve, and they are excluding, expelling and banning people from the center based purely on their political perspective,” said Pauline Park, a founding member of QFOLC and a prominent transgender rights activist.

The LGBT Center’s troubles began after Michael Lucas, a wealthy Israeli-Russian-American gay porn director who is also the founder of Lucas Entertainment, New York’s largest gay adult film company, threatened to organize a donor boycott February 22 in response to there being a “Party to End Israeli Apartheid” fundraiser scheduled for early March. Lucas, who married former president of the LGBT Center Richard Winger in November 2008, is known for his efforts to promote Israel’s image as a gay haven as well as for his anti-Muslim activism.

Hours after Lucas’ call for a boycott, Glenda Testone, the LGBT Center’s executive director, announced that the party was canceled. The fundraiser, which was eventually held at Queens Pride House, where Park is on the board of, was for Siege Busters, a New York-based Palestine solidarity group with many queer activists. Siege Busters had been meeting at the LGBT Center since August 2010 without incident.

“The same forces that are trying to paint Israel as a gay haven so that people will forget about the occupation are the same people and lobby groups pressuring the center,” Emmaia Gelman, a member of both QAIA and QFOLC, told the Independent during a June 8 sit-in at the LGBT Center.

At a March 13 community forum, Testone told the audience that the Siege Busters event, which raised money for the upcom-



‘STOP PUSHING QUEERS INTO THE STREET’: Queer pro-Palestinian groups, including Queers Against Israeli Apartheid and Queers for an Open LGBT Center, have staged protests, sit-ins and other demonstrations in the hopes that the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender will allow them to hold meetings at the center. Protesters who took part in a demonstration outside of the center on March 5, pictured above. CREDIT: Irish Queers/Picasa

ing second “Freedom Flotilla” to Gaza, was canceled because it was “controversial” and “not LGBT-focused,” according to the Gay City News. While Testone did not mention donor pressure as a reason, queer activists say it’s clear what prompted the canning of the Siege Busters event.

“The center has always been a place for all sorts of people to meet at,” noted John Francis Mulligan, a longtime queer activist and member of QAIA. But now, “the current leadership of the center are not sticking by that mandate.”

Cindi Creager, the center’s director of communications, told *The Independent* in an email that they “are not doing interviews at this time.”

After the embroilment around Siege Busters, QAIA applied to rent space at the LGBT Center, and the request was granted because they were an LGBT group and they signed a new “non-discrimination” pledge. But after they met on May 26, Lucas denounced the center again.

In an email published online, Lucas wrote that the center was an “anti-Israel nest” and called on people to lobby government officials to cut funding off to the center, and proposed paying for a New York Times ad. Although the center denies that elected officials contacted them, Stuart Appelbaum, the openly gay Israel booster who heads the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store

Union, told *Gay City News* that he was “aware of offices of elected officials reaching out to try to save the Center from itself... People at every level said they were going to call to find out what was going on.”

According to their 2009 filings with the Internal Revenue Service, the last year available, the center receives around \$3 million in government funding.

By June 3, the LGBT Center issued another statement, this time announcing the moratorium.

“We must keep our focus squarely on providing life-changing and life-saving programs and services to the LGBTQ community in New York City,” Testone said in a statement posted online. “We respect those who are deeply passionate about these issues, and we respectfully ask that they take meetings outside of the Center.”

QAIA has taken direct action against the policy by organizing unauthorized “sit-in” meetings like the one on June 8.

Queer activists in solidarity with Palestinians’ struggle against the Israeli occupation see the battle over the LGBT Center as the latest front in what they call Israel and its advocates’ “pinkwashing” campaign. “Pinkwashing” refers to efforts by Israel to promote itself as a liberal democratic promoter of gay rights in the middle of an anti-gay Middle East in order to cover up its occupation of Palestine. The controversy

in New York mirrors one in Toronto, where the mayor threatened to withhold funding from the city’s gay pride parade if a different Queers Against Israeli Apartheid group participated.

Palestine solidarity activists say they plan to keep up the pressure. Another unauthorized sit-in is planned for early next month, and Queers Against Israeli Apartheid continue to march as a contingent in gay pride parades around the city. On June 20, a picket was held outside a fundraiser for the center.

The center’s actions are “really meant to silence those who are doing pro-Palestine solidarity work in the LGBT community,” Park said.

For more information about Queers Against Israeli Apartheid (QAIA) and Queers for an Open LGBT Center (QFOLC), visit queersagainstapartheid.org and openthecenter.blogspot.com.

EXILE IN THE PROMISED LAND

Why Black America Won't Walk on Obama

BY NICHOLAS POWERS

Black America is in crisis. In my neighborhood of Bed-Stuy, families live in small apartments next to empty boarded-up buildings. Cops arrest people at random to meet their quotas. Jobless teens stand on the corner. Behind these glimpses of local life is a national crisis. The NAACP reports that out of 38 million African-Americans, 15.5 percent are unemployed, twice the rate of whites. Also, 25.8 percent of black people live in poverty while 9 percent of whites do. Thousands of black families are falling into hunger, fear and homelessness.

As Black America collapses its approval rating of Obama holds at 85 percent. The worse real life gets, the more we believe in him. This faith was locked in on Nov. 4, 2008 when Obama was elected our first black president. He strode to the podium and said, "America — I have never been more hopeful than I am tonight. I promise you — we as a people will get there." We heard an echo of Martin Luther King Jr. prophesying 40 years earlier like Moses on the mountain top, "We as a people will get to the Promised Land!"

In the Bible, after Moses died it was Joshua who led the Hebrews into the Promised Land. He destroyed the Canaanites and divided the land among the tribes. Since the mass conversion of black people to Christianity during slavery, the Exodus myth is one of the grand narratives into which Black America fit its own history. On election night, in an act of group transference, we relived our past in the present. Obama was our Joshua and we were coming home.

In psycho-analysis the projection of unconscious desires onto another and re-enacting old scenes in the present is called transference. In therapy, patients bring repressed emotions to the surface in order to act out a forgotten scene. The healing revelation comes as they realize who they're talking to is not in front of them but inside them.

Transference happens not just in therapy but in the voting booth. Black America can no longer see beyond Obama because it still sees itself in Obama. During the 2008 presidential election, Black America projected its repressed desire to be free onto a man who could not fulfill it. Now we are unable to have the revelation that what we saw in Obama was actually within ourselves. Until we do, the black working-class, the jobless, homeless, former convicts or unemployed college graduates will not become a militant political force to challenge the Obama administration, the Tea Party and its own middle-class.

RACE AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

Overlooking the election-night festivals, CNN analyst David Gergen framed Obama's victory as the last scene of King's uncompleted life. "This is the Joshua Generation," he said, "We can reach something we never thought we could reach 40 years ago."

But just a year before, no one thought of Obama as Joshua, he wasn't even black enough for many whereas Hillary Clinton

was the wife of the first "black" president. Her husband, former president Bill Clinton bragged of growing up poor in the South, seeing it desegregated and filled his cabinet with black officials. Toni Morrison said, "This is our first black President. Blacker than any actual black person who could ever be elected in our children's lifetime."

Loyalty to Clinton spilled over to his wife and in contrast Obama looked like an interloper. His "blackness" was questioned in newspapers, barber-shops and churches. Driving it was the fear that placing hope into him would end in bitterness or worse — his assassination. Blacks supported Clinton over Obama by 57 to 33 percent. But then in January 2008, Obama won mostly white Iowa and Black America saw him as a real vehicle for its political desire and an emotional transference began.

In 2008 as Obama surged in polls and delegate counts he went from being a blank candidate to a black one. His skin-color, his progressive rhetoric transformed him but most of all were the racist attacks. During the primaries, Hillary Clinton appealed to "hard-working white Americans" and later speculated about Obama's assassination.

Minorities have a prejudice-radar and it blipped. As Black America's loyalty drained from her, it transferred to him.

After the primaries, Republicans pictured Obama as Osama. Black America saw the attacks on him were really attacks on them and encircled him. As we inched closer to election panic and hope shot through us. Obama had a messianic glow as if he was part of a larger story. A desire began to surface from the gut. It was a desire buried in the body because living in a racist society is like living at the bottom of the ocean, one moves under the weight of millions of tons of hate. And the one simple need is to swim to the surface and simply breathe.

The need to breathe free began when 11 Africans were stolen and shipped to the New World. Two million people died, tossed into the dark waters where sharks tore them into clouds of blood. The survivors worked in hot fields, had children who grew and had children themselves and with each cycle of life the memory of home lost.

But in the Exodus myth, black people found a grand-narrative of a God who frees his people and guides them home. Mass slave conversions to Christianity were first noted in 1760. Southern white preachers used the Bible to promote obedience but after official services, slaves met in the woods to sing of Moses and God's deliverance of the Jews from Egyptian slavery.

It was a hope often hidden because it's the most vulnerable part of one's soul. And every time this wild hope surfaced it seemed KKK terrorists or white police or white FBI or a white assassin's bullets or closing factories or crack pipes glowing like fireflies in empty buildings or black poverty pimps would kill it again.

But on election night, millions cheered

at what we believed was the climax of the centuries-long Exodus; a black man, president of the most powerful nation on Earth would finally guide us home, let us breathe. Rev. Jesse Jackson, who saw King shot in the throat and hugged the man's bloody shirt to his chest, 40 years later wept openly as Obama stepped to the podium to claim his victory.

THE MAKING OF AN ICON

In the space of a few years, Obama was transformed from an obscure Illinois state senator to a man who appeared on posters in barber shops alongside Malcolm X, Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr. It was not

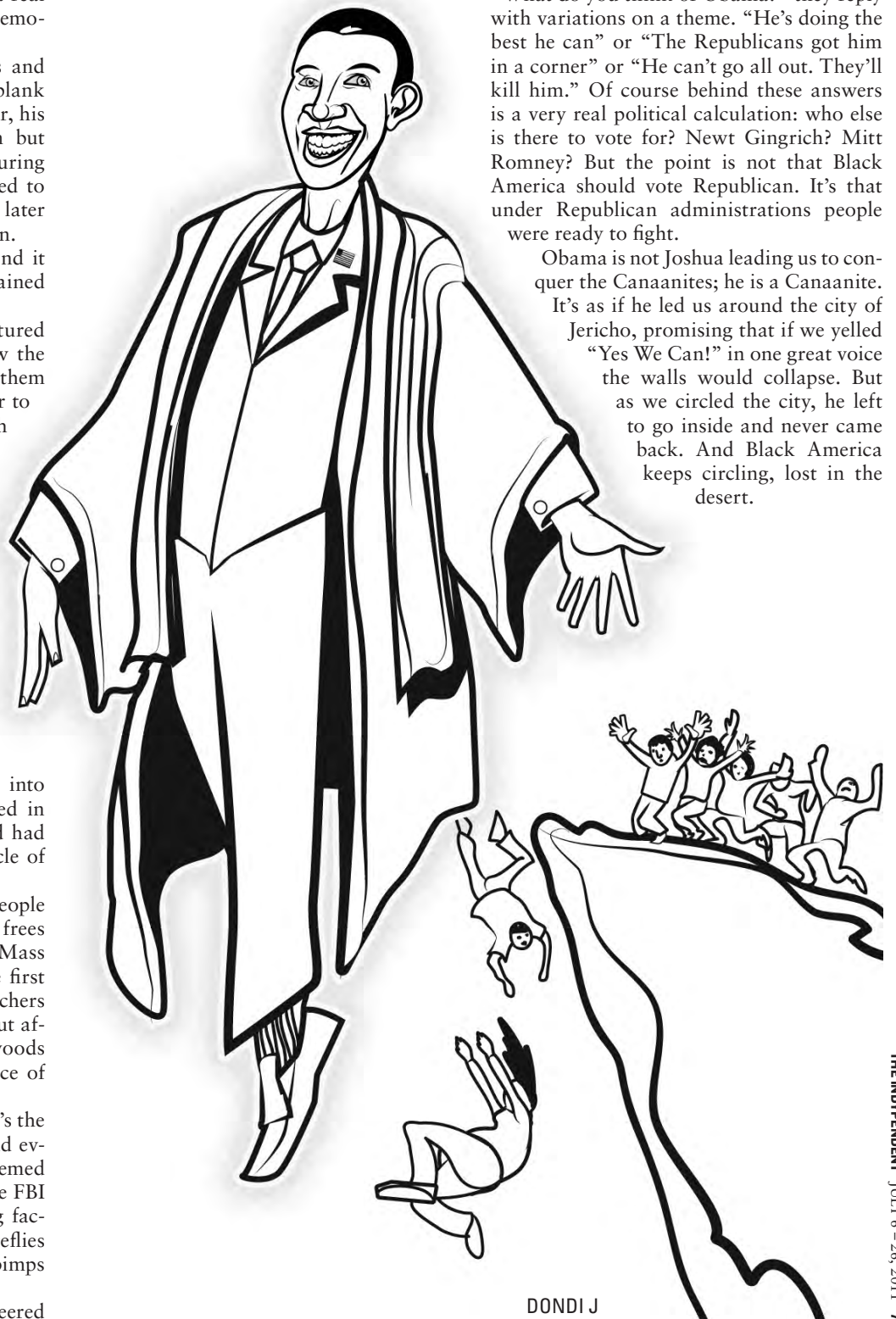
"natural" but done through a corporate political campaign that tapped into a huge social reservoir of frustrated desire. It was a massive group transference that set him as Joshua.

During the campaign, Obama repeatedly tapped into this grand-narrative. In 2007 he spoke at a historic black church in Selma, Alabama, "The previous generation, the Moses generation, took us 90 percent of the way there. We still got that 10 percent in order to cross over to the other side. The question I have is what's called of us in this Joshua generation?"

Since Obama is our Joshua, there is reluctance in Black America to critique him or withhold support. When I ask my neighbors, "What do you think of Obama?" they reply with variations on a theme. "He's doing the best he can" or "The Republicans got him in a corner" or "He can't go all out. They'll kill him." Of course behind these answers is a very real political calculation: who else is there to vote for? Newt Gingrich? Mitt Romney? But the point is not that Black America should vote Republican. It's that under Republican administrations people were ready to fight.

Obama is not Joshua leading us to conquer the Canaanites; he is a Canaanite.

It's as if he led us around the city of Jericho, promising that if we yelled "Yes We Can!" in one great voice the walls would collapse. But as we circled the city, he left to go inside and never came back. And Black America keeps circling, lost in the desert.



The Mass Psychology of Liberalism

By Stanley Aronowitz

Presidential politics is sport and spectacle alike. Unlike European countries, which devote a few months to mostly publicly financed national elections, the United States’ privatized presidential race is a brain-numbing, two-year process. Since the November 2010 midterm poll, many Republican hopefuls have tossed their hats in the ring, and the campaign is now in full swing. In re-election mode, President Obama has been racing around, assuring us that the economic recovery, although slow, is progressing despite the 25 million jobless and underemployed, and despite his steadfast refusal to craft a jobs program. We have 16 months of spin, speeches, scandals and wedge issues to go before November 2012, but the spectacle cannot hide the fact that there is little difference between the two parties.

In reality, the ideological divide between the Democrats and Republicans is between the two historic branches of liberalism.

Liberalism is the dominant capitalist ideology. But like most dominant ideologies it has several variants. The 18th century doctrine rests on three pillars of freedom: the “free market” — freedom from government regulation; “freedom from coercion” — the individual negative liberty of freedom from central powers either of law or custom; and “freedom of association,” which entails freedom for groups and parties to organize, assemble and seek elective office under the capitalist state.

Of course, the free market has never really existed. For centuries business has sought and secured the financial, political and legal support of the state, but resists according the same privileges to the rest of us. Private capital avoids shouldering the risk of building roads, ports, power systems, waterworks, airports or public transport. On the flip side it relies on government to provide commu-

nication mediums, courts, police and emergency services, zone land, issue currencies, set interest rates and monetary policy and regulate — and repress — labor. And when everything blows up, as it inevitably does, from finance markets and foreign relations to oil wells and nuclear reactors, it needs government to assume the liabilities, clean up the mess and restore the profit-making order.

In recent decades, free-market liberals have become known as “conservatives” even though they are no longer conservationists or environmentalists like their Republican predecessors. They insist against all logic and science that the market will take care of climate change and oppose regulations aimed at slowing down the coming disaster.

LIBERAL ORIGINS

The second variant is modern liberalism (or progressivism). It has no substantive disagreement with the pillars of the free market, freedom of association and freedom from coercion. Modern liberalism took shape in the post-Civil War era, insisting that small business needed government protection with the rise of the giant trusts, and it advocated for a central bank, leading to the creation of the Federal Reserve Bank in 1913. Upton Sinclair’s exposé of the meat packing industry in *The Jungle* along with the 1911 Triangle Factory Fire in Lower Manhattan, in which 146 women workers were killed, led to federal and local laws regulating workplace safety and consumer goods (and building upon standards for deadly tenements).

The underlying premise of modern liberalism is that small business, workers, women and racial minorities need some protection from uncontrolled market forces. But under no circumstance, except perhaps economic crisis or wars, should the state own or operate productive property. The New Deal reforms — Social Security, the National Labor Relations Act, unemployment and workers’ compensation, minimum wages and

the 40-hour week — represent the apex of the achievements of modern social reform. Apart from Medicare, Medicaid, the Civil and Voting Rights Acts, and the regulatory burst under Nixon, incremental change, the signal motto of modern liberalism, has ground to a halt. The age of reform ended in 1938, but liberal reformism remains the leading edge of a dubious left in American politics: Dubious because the prevailing left does not oppose the capitalist system but holds that it can be sufficiently reformed to secure a measure of social justice.

In this respect, since the 1930s, the American Left organized in and around the Communist and Socialist parties can better be described as “left-liberal. With few exceptions, they refuse to openly discuss, let alone agitate for, alternatives such as socialism and communism. Even most of the so-called revolutionary socialist parties and formations have confined their activities to economic struggles within trade unions, austerity fightbacks, organizing opposition to U.S. imperialism and racism, and supporting the liberal defense of reproductive rights and civil liberties. There is a scattering of socialist education institutions, notably New York’s Brecht Forum, and study groups have mushroomed, mainly to read Marx’s *Capital* and Lenin’s *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism*.

What is lacking is any public perspective beyond liberal reformism. Sharing the liberal aversion to new thinking, the self-designated Left has spurned utopianism, without which radicalism remains a series of anti-capitalist rants. The American Left, sadly following the pattern of most of the European Left, is the party of protest and resistance. Therefore we are in the historical moment of one-dimensionality. Major distinctions between the liberals and the Left are purely tactical.

The liberals are devoted to working within the system, but have lost their taste for incremental change. The Left proclaims that

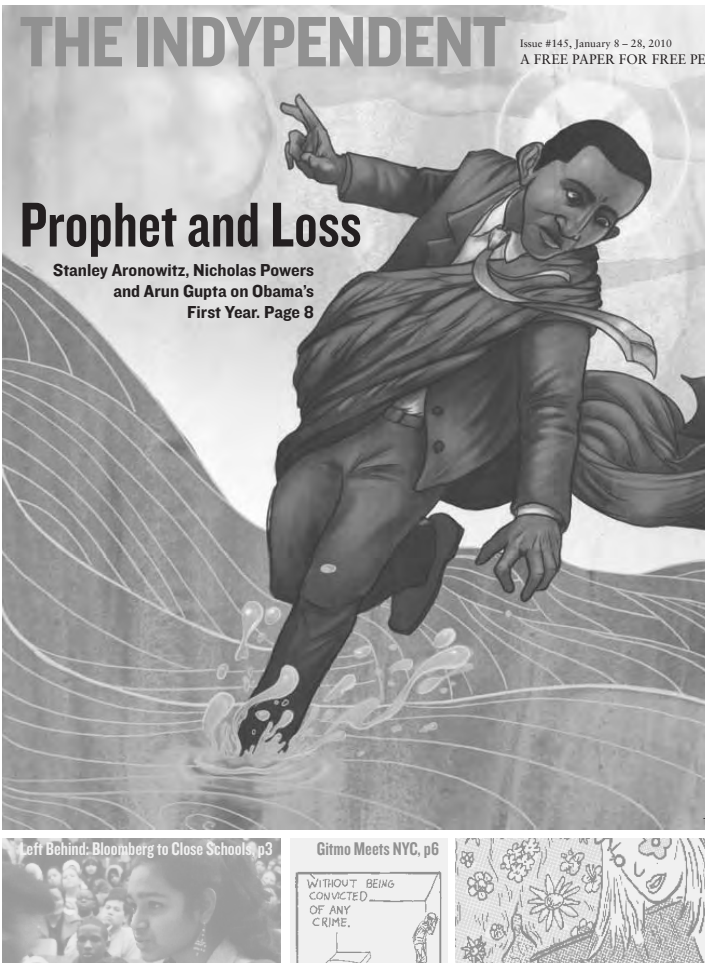
the system is rotten, but seems to have lost its taste for ideas.

THE GREAT FEAR

Liberals today are in the grip of the Great Fear. They are afraid of losing their comfortable berths in the professions, the unions and the universities. Some have gone over to the enemy, but the larger trend is that activists have gone into political retirement. Among the still active, that fear has produced considerable bad faith: at some level liberals know better, but manage to convince themselves of positions that contradict their beliefs. For example, in 1996, some greeted Bill Clinton’s signing of the welfare reform legislation, ending the only guaranteed income program in American history, as a valid move toward making the poor more self-reliant.

Even liberal fealty to social reform has been relegated to nostalgia. They claim the mantle of the New Deal, but have little will to fight for its unfulfilled programs. Most liberals inside and outside of Congress sided with Obama’s healthcare plan — a huge gift to for-profit insurers — instead of insisting on a single-payer plan that would put these companies out of business. On foreign policy, most liberals support Obama’s pledge to withdraw troops from Iraq and Afghanistan at a snail’s pace even as private military companies pick up the slack and the occupations continue without end. As for new wars, liberal Illinois Sen. Richard Durbin argues that the White House should acknowledge that the United States is engaged in “hostilities” against the government of Libya, seeking congressional approval under the War Powers Act. But Durbin hastens to assure his colleagues and Obama that he would oppose cutting off funds for the Libya war.

Liberal institutions, a few major journals of opinion, feminist, civil rights and labor organizations, and intellectuals such as Paul Krugman, Joseph Stiglitz and Robert Kuttner nip at the edges of social and



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— Howard Zinn, author of *A People’s History of the United States*

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foreign affairs by, for example, urging the confirmation of Elizabeth Warren to head the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, and calling on the administration to address the crisis of 25 million jobless and underemployed Americans. But as the two-year-long presidential campaign wears on, liberal commentators, with exceptions such as Chris Hedges and Robert Scheer, carefully elide direct criticism of the Obama administration's record of right-wing policies. The liberals direct their fire to the Right but are in the throes of their own capitulations. They are stuck in the thrall of hope that Obama really means to change things, that his compromise and parry is prologue, not definitive policy. Lurking beneath these sentiments are the twin specters of Right and Left. Beyond Obama lies the abyss. What is the basis of the great fear?

Since the 1936 election, when the proto-fascist Liberty Party emerged in the face of the Republican collapse before the dazzling success of the New Deal, the liberals have attached themselves to the Democrats, sanctifying them as savior of the people and shield against the right. This fecklessness was reinforced by the grim McCarthy years, an era initiated during the Truman administration with loyalty oaths, the Attorney General's list of subversive organizations, the firing of suspect government employees, the Communist trials of 1949 and 1950, and the persecution of countless radicals with jail terms. In the 1950s, most unions, the media and liberal and agricultural organizations purged their staff of Reds, and Hollywood blacklisted many of its major talents.

SECURITY BEFORE DEMOCRACY

With a handful of exceptions, liberals fled from their own civil liberties principles and politics itself. Most kept quiet as liberal democratic rights were trampled because they were glad to be rid of radicals and terrified to oppose the authorities. Some intellectuals rationalized their collaboration with McCarthyism by arguing the Communists were not a legitimate political party but agents of the Soviet Union, a conspiracy masquerading in the garb of democracy. Others quixotically celebrated what they perceived as the expansion of freedom for anti-communist intellectuals in the 1950s, turning their heads from the spreading state terror that prompted the government to engage in deportations, some radicals to flee their own country, and others to go into hiding. The eminent liberal critic Lionel Trilling led the pack of "New York Intellectuals" in "choosing the West" as the lesser evil in a bipolar world. Some, like philosopher Sidney Hook, and *Partisan Review* editor William Phillips actively collaborated with the CIA in purging Communists and independent radicals from cultural organizations.

The state terrorism perpetrated by Democratic and Republican administrations from the late 1940s to the 1960s may seem to be over. However, the political repression remains an underlying force in American politics. We dare not openly debate alternatives to a capitalism that embraces the permanent war economy. The word "socialism," when pinned to publicly financed healthcare, sends many of its supposed advocates into compromise or denial.

Partly due to the deprivations of the Great Depression, but also because of economic and political uncertainty, few radicals are willing to risk living a public life that carries with it potential costs. There are many radicals and Marxists "of the (comfortable academic) chair" but few who are prepared to put their voices where their ideology is. They teach and write scholarly works, but disdain open opposition to the system. The prevailing tendency, among liberals and the



MARLENA BUCZEK SMITH

general population as well, has become the quest for security, for certainty where tomorrow is no worse than a repeat of today. There is little tolerance for visionaries, for people willing to plunge into the unknown. In fact, as the epidemic of mental illness and prescription pill-popping attests, tens of millions are seeking refuge from the banality of everyday life. We want no movers and shakers to disturb our mental tranquility, even if that peace is an artificial escape.

At the same time, many liberals are still afflicted by the memory of the 1960s New Left that directed its fire at liberals who, they perceived, had forsaken the fight for a just world. Former radicals who had drifted to the center like Daniel Bell, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. and Seymour Martin Lipset made it a special project to repudiate the Left, calling its minions immature and irresponsible. They even engaged in red-baiting when some student activists declared their support for the Vietnamese Communists.

In fact, the harbingers of mass radicalism, the New Left, parts of the student movement and the militant wing of the black freedom movement that ended by the early 1970s, was the last concrete moment that evinced an outburst of liberal rage. For the first time since the 1920s a visible Left that released a vast quantity of libidinal energy, surfaced. In addition to committing acts of resistance such as civil disobedience and occasional violence against objects of capitalist and military power, it advanced concepts such as participatory democracy, genuine equality in sex as much as the economy,

communal living, the revolt against alienated labor, guaranteed income and socialism that raced through the hearts and minds of young people like a contagious disease.

Liberal faculty at Harvard, Columbia, Michigan and elsewhere recoiled at the rebirth of student activism. They saw little reason for university reform, distanced themselves from the teach-ins against the Vietnam War, and turned their collective backs on black student demands for academic programs addressing their history and culture. The liberals became some of the most forthright defenders of the universities even as these institutions were moving towards corporatization. Liberal intellectuals insisted the universities were bastions of liberty and the New Left was an authoritarian movement bent, perhaps unintentionally, on its destruction.

The ambiguous classic liberal slogan of the French Revolution — Liberty, Equality, Fraternity — enjoyed a rebirth in the 1960s. But the liberals were not pleased. Having discovered their fealty to the status quo, and in haste to avoid the taint of radicalism, many embraced compromise with the conservatives as a new principle.

Today, we are witnessing variations on traditional liberal ideology. The time-honored concept of equality has been replaced with the slogan of diversity. What R.H. Tawney termed "The Acquisitive Society" in his 1920 book, may permit a plethora of identities, but it has nullified the aspiration for more equality. Once-liberal ideas of redistributive justice, higher taxes on the rich

to correct the inequalities of the market and community control of key institutions such as schools, have all but vanished from the modern liberal's lexicon. The notion that the state can level the class playing field has no high-profile supporters. And while liberals mutter about jobs, the self-evident idea that shorter hours would produce more jobs than any program of government spending has been stricken from the conversation. Even the labor movement — the folks who brought us the weekend — has abandoned its most subversive demand: less alienated work. In the recent struggles around the public sector budget crisis, unions have granted draconian cuts in wages and benefits in order to preserve jobs. Nowhere has the program of shifting the burden of the crisis from working people to the Wall Street and the upper middle class been advanced as a serious alternative.

HUDDLED IN CORNERS

There has been a steady rightward drift among intellectuals since the 1960s. Tenure, once a system to prevent arbitrary firings, has become a reward for adequate scholarship and teaching. Its erosion over the decades has occurred during the endless fiscal crises of education and the state, producing an underclass of disenfranchised part-time teachers and untenured full-time faculty who observe silence lest their political views and activities jeopardize tenure prospects. The mostly liberal tenured faculty keeps its collective nose to the grindstone, especially in the few hundred elite colleges and universities where relatively ample amenities encourage complacency. The rise of union activism among part-time and some full-time faculty in chronically underfunded institutions carefully presents itself in the garb of conventional trade unionism. Few are willing to step beyond the boundaries of acceptable action, at least before Wisconsin's public sector teachers, professors and their student allies broke the mold when their backs were to the wall.

We live in a time when liberal reform is dead. Not just because capital waged a successful war on labor and the social welfare state, but also because the liberal opposition is fragmented, their organizations shriveled, their leadership intimidated by the attacks and huddled into corners of impotence. We are at a moment when the liberals will offer the terms of surrender to their adversaries: "cut back Medicare and Social Security, but modestly raise taxes on the wealthy as a symbolic gesture so that we can save face." They have permitted the Right to seize the initiative and, exceptions by unions notwithstanding, are still plagued by the ghost of the radical movements that still send them into the arms of the neoliberals. In fact, the distinction between the welfare liberals and neoliberals has all but vanished. Despite signs of organized discontent, we are still plagued by a mass psychology of fear. The risk-takers have been relegated to the margins, their numbers overtaken by those seeking security, conformity and compromise. The decline of the radical imagination hobbles attempts at resistance, let alone creating alternatives.

The system survives on the eclipse of the radical imagination, the absence of a viable political opposition with roots in the general population and the conformity of its intellectuals who, to a large extent, are subjugated to the great fear.

Stanley Aronowitz is a distinguished professor at the CUNY Graduate Center and the author of more than 25 books, including Left Turn: Forging a New Political Future.

HOW TO HAVE PUBLIC PARTIES

By LINDSEY CATHERINE CORNUM

The New York Club Kids of the late '80s and early '90s became famous for throwing “outlaw” parties in places such as the High Line tracks (before it was an authorized “green space”), a donut shop and subway cars. While these parties gained notoriety more for the rampant drug use than the clever use of ordinary spaces for subversive fun, their brazenness is something to be admired. In a city that becomes more exclusive, expensive and policed with each summer season, it might be helpful to look to the Club Kids' model of searching out cheap thrills. All it takes to have a public party is some creativity, a little bit of willing defiance and a pack of brown paper bags to cover up those open containers.

BRIDGES

We often think of bridges simply as the passing between two places, but bridges can also be places in themselves (and I don't mean just as a photo background for your NYC scrapbook). The middle of the Manhattan and Williamsburg bridges for instance have small set-off spaces perfect for making or wilin' out. Police almost never come to these areas because that would involve physical activity, and most civilians are too busy getting to the other side to get up in your business.

STATEN ISLAND FERRY

As one of the hallmarks of gratuitous wealth in this country, a yacht is something most of us can only squint at longingly from the shore. However, turn those squinting powers towards the Staten Island Ferry and lo, you have The People's Yacht. The ferry might not look as nice as Jay-Z's ride, but the ride is free, it goes right by Lady Liberty and best of all, drinking is legal (beer is sold, but not hard liquor). One could bring a few friends, some bottles of bubbly and spend the night yo-yo-ing back and forth across the Upper Bay.

ABANDONED SUBWAY STATIONS

If you want to have a truly underground party that doesn't cost \$25 at the door and involve talking to gaggles of performance artists, we hear that subway spelunking offers some intriguing possibilities.

The city is littered with abandoned stations that wait to be rediscovered. For starters, experts say keep your eyes pressed up to the subway car plexiglass, note any turns that twist away from the route and you might be on your way to re-making the map.

Some notable stations include the beautiful City Hall station (approach from the Fulton Street station) built in 1904 as the crown jewel of the subway system or the less opulent graffiti haven of 91st Street station, which is easily approachable on the red line.

If one were to venture down this path, underground adventurers report these explorations do carry some risk, both to one's body and criminal record, and they recom-

mend extreme caution in going onto these tracks, finding one's way down them and also avoiding the bobbing lights that signal city workers are on the way.

For more info on searching out the city's secrets, check out *Undercity*, a documentary short about Stephen Duncan, a self-proclaimed guerrilla historian who spends his nights finding out about the city's buried past and avoiding the transit authorities.

HOTELS

Hotels are havens of amenities that do not necessarily have to be restricted to paying customers. For instance, hotel lounges are great places to sit back and enjoy the free air conditioning. They also often have free Wi-Fi, so you can bring your laptop and work in breezy coolness. Other possible perks are rooftop access, free food and, of course, pools that can be snuck into with the proper “Aw shucks, I forgot my key card” excuse to a real hotel patron.

So, put on some of your nicer duds and stroll through those sliding doors like you have an American Express Black card and a mini-bar with your name on it.

PARKS

For some reason, the NYC parks department closes all parks at dusk or at the latest 2 a.m. After those hours the NYPD will make occasional rounds to harass those posing immense menace to society by lounging on lawns, sitting on a bench or strolling hand-in-hand down a shady lane. Fortunately, police patrol mostly by car or at the most, Segway, and often the most beautiful parts of city parks are those farthest from the roads. Promising venues for the adventurous to explore include the “Forever Wild” section of Riverside, the island castle of Central Park or the nature trails of Prospect Park.

While the places above are all good to start your explorations, the best part of the summer is discovery. Re-appropriating public (and sometimes private) spaces is all about imagination and subversion. More New Yorkers than you think are challenging themselves to step outside the boundaries, jump the fence or stay out past curfew.

NEOLIBERALISM AND PUBLIC SPACE

By BEN SHEPARD

When I moved to the city almost 15 years ago, a friend told me, “New Yorkers do everything in public. We eat, hang out, dance, hold meetings, even have sex in public.” Yet, these practices are compromised by life in the neoliberal city.

Back in the mid-90s, Giuliani attacked community gardens, taxi drivers, pot smokers and sex shops. He seemed to be targeting sites of difference itself. Convivial spaces where people built culture, performed or created community were assaulted by the city's use of petty regulations

like archaic laws against dancing, minor health-code violations and nuisance ordinances. Much of the pulsing nightlife of generations past was threatened by attacks on semi-public spaces. Those who did not pay off the NYPD were often raided or shutdown.

The war on public life continues today. Restaurants increasingly creep into public plazas where they charge the public to sit there. Police restrict park access for vendors to those with expensive permits, and require groups of 50 or more to get permits or face arrest. Recently, the NYPD and media have been labeling street youth who build community in public spaces in

the West Village “criminals” and “drug dealers.”

Nonetheless, many New Yorkers continue to invigorate public life through tactics ranging from street music, roving parties and flash mobs to the persistence of critical mass bicycle rides, Bloombergville and unpermitted parades. They are part of a generations-long movement to fight the privatization of public space by reclaiming the streets of cities around the world.

Benjamin Shepard, Ph.D., is the co-author with Greg Smithsion, of The Beach Beneath the Street: Contesting New York's Public Spaces.

LUCY VALKURY



HOW RADICAL GARDENS GROW

By KRISTY ZHEN

Community gardens offer far more than just a plot of land to grow vegetables — they provide people throughout the city with space to learn about the environment and connect with other New Yorkers. Each community garden is defined by the life surrounding it, says Aresh Javadi, co-founder of More Gardens!, a group that promotes the preservation and development of community gardens in New York City. Javadi told *The Independent* about 13 unique community gardens, detailed below.

PADRES PLAZA SUCCESS GARDEN

E. 139 St. and St. Ann's Ave., Bronx
Mon.-Sun., 2-6 p.m.
(718) 877-7113 • padreplazasuccessgarden.com

This community garden provides a safe haven for children to connect to the natural environment. They offer a four-week summer camp for children ages 8 to 12 and work with local high schoolers throughout the year to protect street trees.

GARDEN OF HAPPINESS

2156-2160 Prospect Ave, Bronx
Mon. – Fri., 12-6 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m.-dusk
Since its creation in 1988, this space has increased the surrounding community's awareness of politics, food and health. “It was more than just beautification and growing, it was about the social and economic well-being of the community as a whole,” says Kar-

en Washington, who is also President of New York City Community Garden Coalition, says about the garden's creation. The Garden of Happiness will host its annual block party on August 27.

LA PLAZA CULTURAL

E. 9th St. and Avenue C
Sat. and Sun., 10 a.m.-7 p.m.
(917) 805-3857 • laplazacultural.com
While this 35-year-old community garden is known best for supporting the arts — from displaying artwork to regularly staging theatrical performances — it really has something for everyone. Some of their free services include permaculture workshops, storytelling for children and cultural events such as Persian fire-jumping.

TAQWA COMMUNITY FARM

90 W. 164th St., Bronx
Mon., Wed. and Fri., 9 a.m.-12 p.m.
(347) 934-7649
Since its founding in 1993, this community garden has transformed from a small plot of land into a farm that spans almost an entire acre. In addition to fruit trees and medicinal plants, the farm also raises bees, who produced 45 pounds of honey last year.

HATTIE CARTHAN COMMUNITY GARDEN

Lafayette Ave. and Marcy Ave., Brooklyn
Mon.-Sun., 12-6 p.m.
(718) 638-3566 • hattiecarthancommunitymarket.com
Although their community farm-

ers market is only in its third season, this garden is well known as a place to explore fresh food options. This summer it will collaborate with Playstreets NYC to hold drumming, dance and cooking workshops. The market takes place every Saturday from 9 a.m.-6 p.m., starting July 9 until the end of November.

LA FINCA DEL SUR

E. 138th St. and Grand Concourse, Bronx
Fri. 5-8:45 p.m.; Sat. 10 a.m.-3 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
(646) 725-2162 • bronxfarmers.blogspot.com
The Bronx's first urban farm run entirely by women of color, this three-acre farm empowers women through creating “a safe, alternative reality to our patriarchal world,” says member Nancy Ortiz.

UCC YOUTH FARM OF EAST NEW YORK FARMS PROJECT

613 New Lots Ave., Brooklyn
Fri., 1-4 p.m.; Sat., 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
(718) 649-7979 • eastnewyorkfarms.org
This neighborhood farm was originally created to educate youth about green space and fresh food. Through its Youth Internship program, which educates youth ages 13 to 18 about food justice, teens learn how to run a farm and help with the Saturday farmers' market throughout the year.

BROOK PARK

E. 141 st St. and Brook Ave., Bronx
Mon.-Sun., 9 a.m.-9 p.m.
(646) 648-4362 • friendsofbrookpark.org

park.org

In addition to films, concerts and cultural events, this park also offers waterfront outreach programs that allow residents to canoe on the Bronx Kill (a waterway that connects the Harlem River to the East River) and empowers members of the community to become advocates for public space.

CHILDREN'S MAGICAL GARDEN

Staton St. and Norfolk St.
Mon.-Fri., 4 p.m.-dusk; Sat., 4 p.m.-dusk; Sun., 2 p.m.-dusk
(212) 505-3026
This kid-friendly space hosts kids events to mark the seasons and helps children learn about gardening through making their own food. For example, their pizza garden grows tomatoes, basil and other ingredients, that the children later use to make pizza.

LE PETIT VERSAILLES

346 E. Houston St.
Thurs.-Sun., 2 p.m.-7 p.m.
(212) 529-8819 • lptvtu.blogspot.com
When the garden was created by Allied Productions, two of the founders were also directors of ABC No Rio, which explains why this space has a history of showcasing the arts. Music, theatrical performances and readings are among a few of the full schedule of events at this LGBT-friendly hub.

EL JARDIN DEL PARAISO

E. 4th and 5th St. between Ave. C and D

OpenTues.-Sun., 11 a.m.-sundown

(917) 684-1135
East villagers benefit from this community garden's workshops, which vary from bokashi composting to puppet-making. Schools also take advantage of the community garden as an educational and recreational space.

EL GALLO GARDEN

152 E. 118th St.
Mon.-Sun., 10 a.m.-7 p.m.
(347) 640-7655
Fruit trees, flowers and vines decorate this 30-year-old community garden to be create a serene place open for social gatherings and celebrations.

RINCON CRIOLLO CULTURAL CENTER

E. 157 St. and Brook Ave., Bronx
Mon.-Sun., 2 p.m.-late night
(347) 839-0520 • centroculturalrinconcriollo.org
Founded in 1987, this popular spot is known as an historic center for the celebration of Bomba and Plectra, traditional music of the Puerto Rican working class. The center regularly holds performances and hosts cookouts on major holidays.

To find the community garden that is closest to you, visit oasis-nyc.net. For information on how to protect community gardens and make them permanent public spaces, visit nycgcg.org.



LUCY VALKURY

Biking in New York City

BY ARUN GUPTA
MAPS BY ANNA GOLD

One of the most wondrous aspects about bicycling in New York is that the city both expands and shrinks dramatically. You can visit neighborhoods inaccessible to public transportation. Far-off parks and beaches can be reached in barely an hour. Panoramic views offer new perspectives on the urban geography. Hidden stretches of coastline along rivers and bays deliver solitude from the fray. The industrial bowels can be plumbed, from landfills and train yards to factories, piers and waterworks.

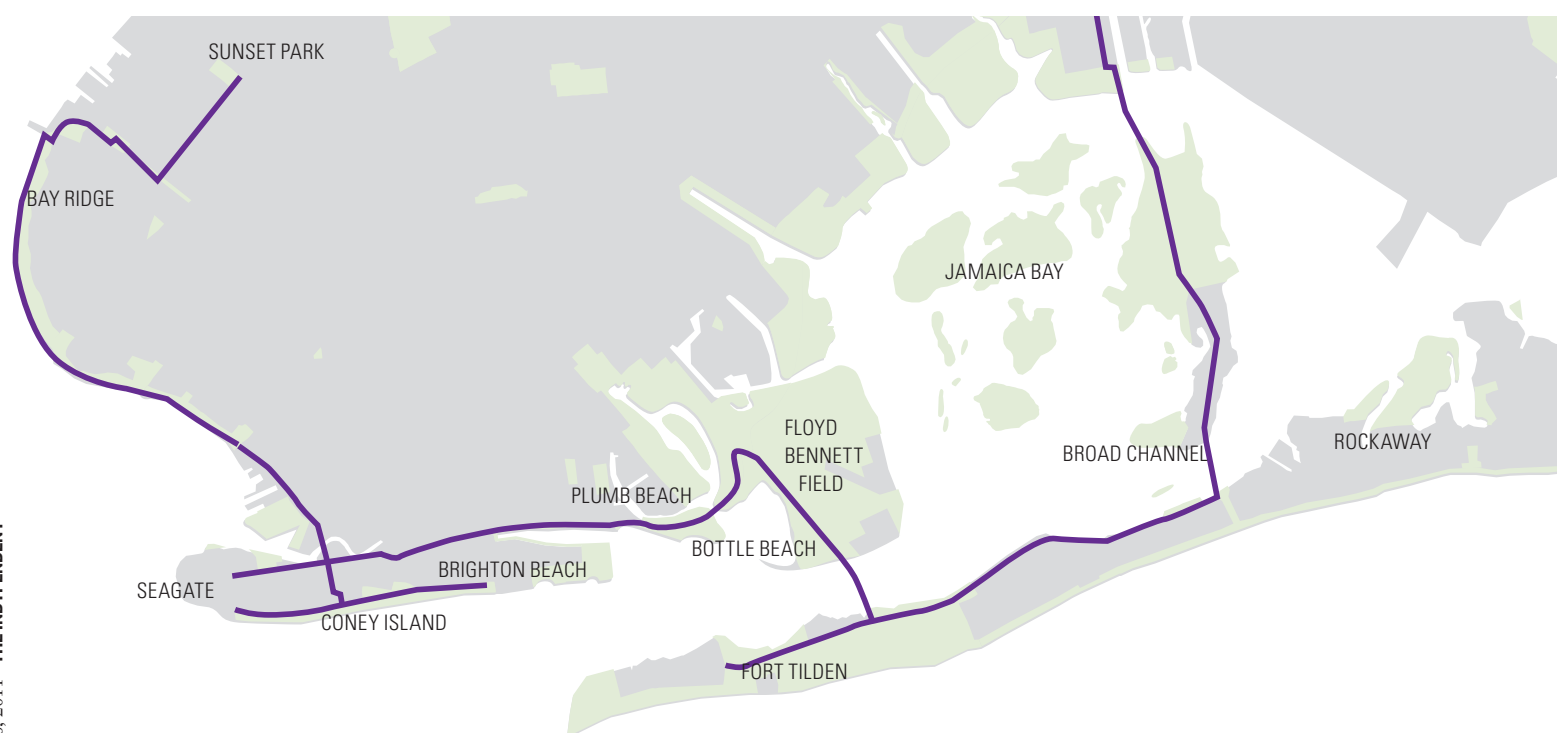
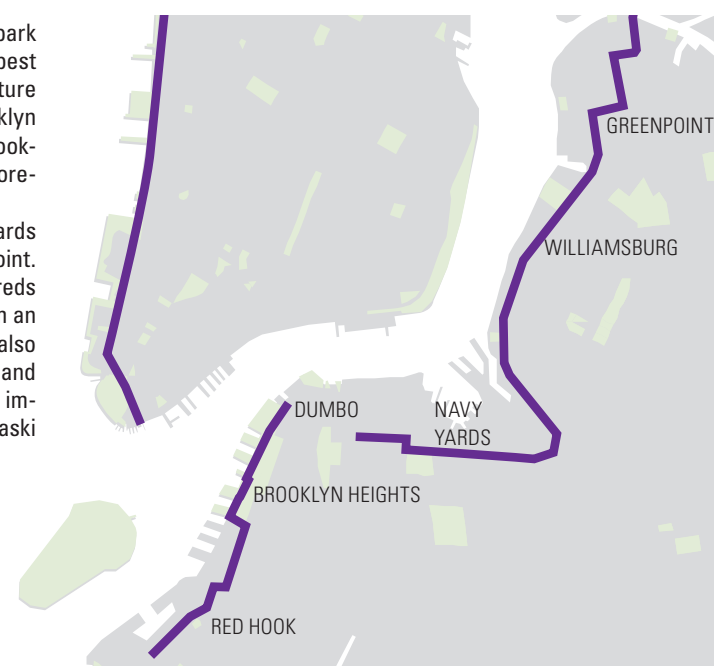
Plus, bicycling has never been easier in the city, with miles of dedicated lanes on streets and car-free greenways. For the Manhattan novice, skip the zoo of Central Park and head out to the West Side greenway, a vehicle-free 13-mile stretch from the Southern tip at the Battery to the Northern terminus near the idyllic Cloisters Museum. For Brooklyn greenhorns, Prospect Park is the best bet; cars are banned on weekends and the 3.4-mile loop is a great way to build stamina and learn the art of navigating traffic in a safe environment. The Bronx is also bicycle-friendly, with greenways bisecting the borough along the Mosholu, Bronx River and Pelham Parkways. The interior of Queens is largely bereft of car-free paths, but Forest Park and Flushing Meadows are spots of two-wheeled tranquility. Staten Island offers a few attractions such as the ship graveyard, but a lack of bike paths and obnoxious motorists makes it best avoided except for experienced cyclists.

There are many websites that can plot bike-friendly routes, including google maps, mapmyride.com and ridethecity.com, but nothing beats doing it yourself or even better, being guided by an experienced hand.

NORTH BROOKLYN

Huge lengths of greenways connect park and beaches and lead to some of the best ethnic cuisine, sights and architecture in the city. Start in Dumbo under the Brooklyn Bridge. Going south takes you through Brooklyn Heights and into Red Hook along the shoreline where you can check out ship traffic.

Going east from Dumbo, skirt the Navy Yards and cut north to Williamsburg and Greenpoint. Just to the east is Bushwick, where hundreds of food factories and warehouses that form an integral link in the city's food chain are also the site of labor struggles for fair wages and humane working conditions by the largely immigrant workforce. Further north the Pulaski Bridge crosses into Queens.



SOUTH BROOKLYN

To get to South Brooklyn, take the D, M, N or R to Sunset Park. On the east side of the park is a massive Art Deco-style public pool, a Works Progress Administration project going strong after 75 years. On the other side, sit on the sloping hill facing west and soak in gorgeous sunsets, a grand sweep of downtown Manhattan and views so far into New Jersey you can see mountains on a clear day.

From Sunset Park, go south and pick up the four-mile-long greenway in Bay Ridge. Punctuated by the massive Modernist Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, the Shore Parkway path joins four small parks, has great views of Lower New York Bay and is ideal for people watching, with joggers, rollerbladers, picnickers, pedestrians, kite flyers, anglers, and other bikers doing their thing.

From where the greenway ends in Bath Beach, Coney Island is a few miles to the southeast by road, but novices often make use of the sidewalk. On the western tip, you can try to

TAKE MANHATTAN BY BIKE

Like the rest of Manhattan, the West Side Greenway is a study in power and privilege. Private commerce creeps into the public space at many points, and the further north one travels from the Financial District, the more diverse and colorful the various scenes become.

From the Southern tip at the **Battery**, one can take in a grand view of the harbor with the Statue of Liberty at its center

The path winds through **Battery Park City**, a 90-acre planned community “reclaimed” from the Hudson River. Numerous gardens and plazas dot the area, bordered by luxury yachts, ritzy condos and over-priced restaurants.

West Side Piers near Christopher St. One of the few safe gathering places for queer and transgendered youth of color, the city has consistently tried to repress public life here.

12th-20th St. A block to the east, the High Line Park offers a corporate-branded respite from the hustle and bustle.

15th-16th St. Pier 57, renamed “Guanatanamo on the Hudson” by hundreds of people illegally detained there by the NYPD during the Republican National Convention in 2004.

17th-22nd St. The Sports Center at Chelsea Piers. Where right-wing liberals go to play for only \$2,000 a year in fees.

22nd St. Pier 62 Skatepark. Free and open to the public 8am to sunset, except winter

46th St. Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum. A floating tribute to phallic weaponry, useful for keeping the dark hordes in line.

After **59th St.**, the path goes under the West Side Highway. A park is to the left. At 70th St., an outdoor café serves up food and beer.

72nd St. One of three spots along the Hudson that offer free kayaking, downtownboathouse.org.

79th St. Boathouse. Reasonably clean public restrooms, a café and a ma-

rina with modest watercraft.

90th St. and after, the West Side Greenaway abuts the banks of the Hudson. Traffic lessens and the path becomes prettier. Picnickers, sunbathers, transients, musicians, people meditating or doing yoga dot the sides of the paths, making this a pleasant ride.

125th St. The path keeps going with a small park and piers across from Fairway. One small stretch is often closed, meaning you have to detour on the road for a few blocks. But don’t miss the next portion, the best of the West Side bicycle path.

137th – 145th St. To no one’s surprise, the North River Wastewater Treatment Plant was moved from a wealthy neighborhood to West Harlem. After a community outcry and organizing, pollution and odor controls were built. It now hosts a 28-

acre park that offers many types of outdoor activities and spectacular views of the Hudson, Palisades and Manhattan skyline.

148th – 155th St. Mostly Dominican families gather in this area. The scene is lively, grilling and baseball are favored pastimes, and the path along the river is pleasant, but the NYPD has cracked down hard on the locals blasting salsa from club-quality audio systems outfitted in their rides.

155th-165th St. Mexican families and food vendors find some much-needed green space along this stretch. Basketball and volleyball courts are heavily used here.

165th – 178th St. This may be the most beautiful spot and one of the best-kept secrets in all of Manhattan, capped by Fort Washington Park. There’s a tiny beach along the

Hudson that appears at low tide, a grassy field and it is almost always sparsely used. It’s an ideal spot for finding peace and quiet in the outdoors.

179th St. The path climbs quickly and fiercely, going from sea level to just below the GW Bridge.

181st St. Take the walkway over the highway and pick up the path over the GW bridge for cycling north and south along the Palisades. Or continue on and check out the Grecian Temple built in 1925.

205th St. The path ends here, but go down the stairs and Inwood Hill Park is just ahead. Also a few minutes away is Fort Tryon Park and the Cloisters Museum, an authentic reconstruction of a medieval monastery set among gardens and trees that offers hours of natural reveries.

IN THE HEART OF QUEENS

Taking the path over the Gil Hodges Marine Parkway Bridge brings you into Queens and the Rockaways. Head toward the beach and then right (west) to Fort Tilden. The lack of lifeguards and sparse ranger patrols makes this a favorite of nudists and swimmers who want to be left alone. Be forewarned, unpredictable riptides on Rockaway claim lives every year. On the other side of the beach, hidden in the dense scrub, are abandoned military bunkers that attract explorers equipped with flashlights, waterproof boots and plenty of bug repellent.

Still further east is a seven-mile stretch of public beach with lifeguards. Around 90th St. is New York’s surf scene, a popular skate park and gourmet food stalls along and off the boardwalk, including excellent fish tacos, coffee, Italian ices, burgers and arepas. The Sand Bar at 116th St. is a true beach-front dive, stocked with red-faced, gin-soaked barflies. At 9pm, after the police usually wrap up their patrols, starts a new scene of beach-combing, fishing, barbecuing, drinking and (risky) night swimming.

Deep in the Rockaways are colonies of decaying, abandoned beach bungalows. Those up for a longer ride can continue on to Seagirt Ave. and

cross the drawbridge into Long Island. Many of the white-sand beaches here are private, but public ones can be accessed by buying a day pass in Atlantic Beach.

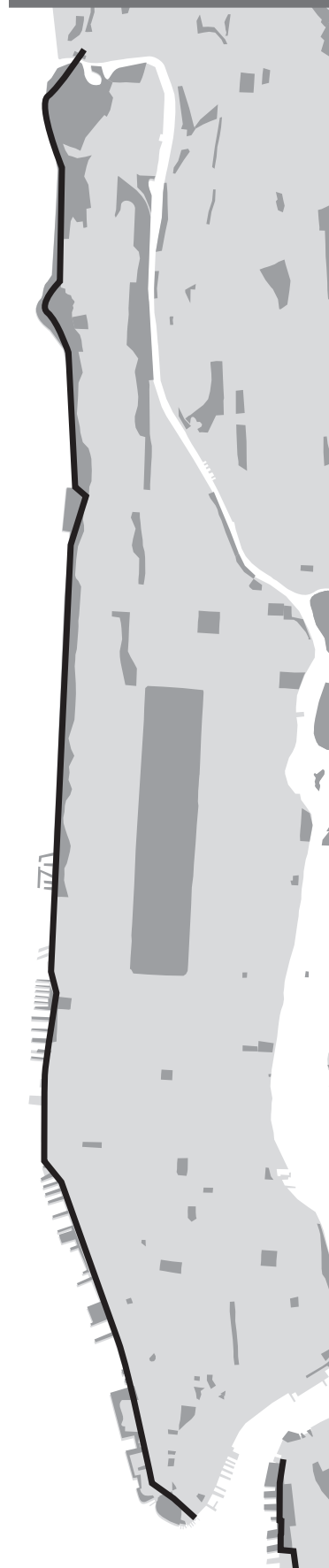
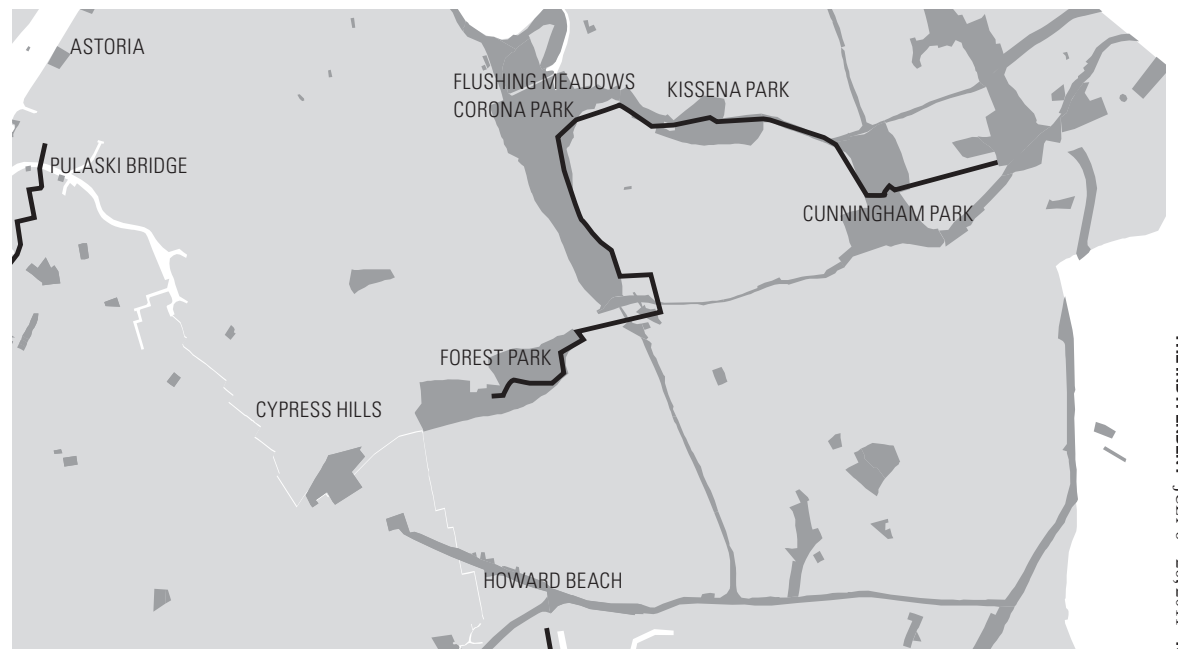
An alternate route back into the city from the Rockaways is available by going north across the Veterans Memorial Bridge around 95th St. At the top is a breathtaking 360-degree vantage point where you can see every borough, deep in Long Island, Staten Island and the Verrazano Bridge, jet planes taking off and landing at JFK, cargo ships in the Atlantic Ocean, and the picturesque islands, marshes and waterways of the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. The refuge, with its myriad avian residents, is easy to access by continuing north. After crossing another bridge, the path ends in Howard Beach, worth a ride through for garish home flourishes of columns, marble, tiled driveways, stone lions, fake waterfalls, and double winding staircases.

In Howard Beach, the Shore Parkway leads west, 10 miles back to Coney Island. Or journey a few miles north to Forest Park. To the southwest are paths and bike routes on streets snaking through Forest Park and Cypress Hills Cemetery. To the north is Flushing

Meadows Corona Park, home to the Unisphere, a 140-foot-tall steel globe mounted inside a giant fountain that kids use to cool off. Nearby is a new (privately funded) skate park, replicating many top spots for tricks such as the Brooklyn Banks 9-stair rail, Union Square’s rail and steps, 1 Police Plaza 7-stair rail, and the Chrystie Park ledge. The two-square-mile Flushing Meadows has a wealth of other sites, including the hands-on New York Hall of Science; the man-made Meadow Lake, open for fishing, boating and sailing; and the Queens Museum of Art, which contains a huge scale model of New York City.

East of Flushing Meadows is the Queens Botanical Garden and the velodrome in Kissena Park, where you can pretend to be an Olympic racer, tearing around the banked track. East is Cunningham Park, which has miles of mountain bike trails. Turning north at Alley Pond Park will carry you along the northern edge of Queens through seaside neighborhoods and scenic biking along bays that barely seem like New York.

Other spots not to be missed in Queens include the Socrates Sculpture Park and the 330-long public pool, both in Astoria along the East River.



check out Seagate. An enclave mainly of Russians, Hasidim and the elderly, Seagate is separated by walls and security from dilapidated blocks housing mostly Blacks and Latinos. One or two cyclists (helps if you’re white and female) can often convince the security guard to let them peddle through this apartheid-style burg.

Coney Island – “The People’s Playground” – is being threatened by invasive species like high-rise condos, chain stores and sports bars. The iconic Cyclone Rollercoaster and Nathan’s are secure, and the Circus Sideshow and Burlesque at the Beach continue to serve up healthy doses of freaks and sleaze, but the “Shoot the Freak” paintball game has been shuttered for now by the new corporate bosses. Still, it’s a prime destination for baking in the sun, drinking cheap beers and even sneaking a quick toké amid a sea of all colors, classes and cultures.

More beaches can be found in Brighton Beach and Manhattan Beach, a secluded spit of land that vies

for having the most-appalling named thoroughfare in the city, “Heroes of Operation Iraqi Freedom Way.” Those seeking pleasure cruises or fishing expeditions can find numerous options at the pier in Sheepshead Bay.

Further east is the next section of the Shore Parkway, part of the Gateway National Recreation Area. First is Plumb Beach, a favorite of kite boarders. Secluded beaches on inlets and peninsulas lie unused except for the few who venture off the beaten path. After a couple of miles on the greenway, turn right (south) at the traffic light. After a mile, adventurers (with sturdy footwear) pick up foot trails and make for “Bottle Beach” at Dead Horse Bay, an old landfill being eroded by rising ocean waters, uncovering unique glass containers many decades old. On the other side, Floyd Bennett Field is a prime spot for biking, and hiking as well as the only campground in the city.

Eat Your Way Around the World

BY ARUN GUPTA

While cities like Paris, Hong Kong and Tokyo generally have more sophisticated food cultures than New York City, the Big Apple probably has the broadest variety of cuisines in the world. Food provides an easy way to explore the diverse cultures of the city. The thousands of restaurants offer windows into the hundreds of ethnic groups that call the city home. Here is but a small sampling for many adventures into New York's gastronomic soul.

BAY RIDGE

This mixed neighborhood has the best Middle Eastern restaurant in the city, **Tanoreen** at 7523 3rd Ave. near 76th St., which specializes in Palestinian cooking with virtually every dish exceptional. Close by is a Middle Eastern deli at 6905 3rd Ave. with excellent take-out food. **Nordic Delicacies** at 6909 3rd Ave. keeps lingonberry jam, meatballs and smoked herrings for those jonesing for a Scandinavian feast. Meanwhile, **Grand Sichuan House** at 8701 5th Ave. is a tribute to the spicy, mouth-tingling cuisine of the region.

BRIGHTON BEACH

Home to dozens of Russian restaurants, the best eatery is the "Ukrainian fusion" **Café Glechik** at 3159 Coney Island Ave. The soups and stews have deep, rich flavors, while small dumplings (vareniki) and the larger Russian version (pelemeni) can be found on nearly every table. Nearby are Russian supermarkets stocked with everything you could want from the old country, including plenty of caviar and smoked fish. At 1073 Brighton Beach Ave. is **La Brioché Café**, which is like a Willy Wonka of pastry, stacked and piled in every available nook. On the boardwalk near 6th St. are a few restaurants. They are over-priced and service is slow, but the garlic fries at **Tatiana Grill** are the perfect oceanside snack, accompanied by pitchers of the fruity beer called kvas.

MIDWOOD & SHEEPSHEAD BAY

Deep in South Brooklyn is a stretch of temples of Turkish cuisine. **Tacis Beyti** at 1955 Coney Island Ave. (near Ave. P) is considered by many to be the best of the bunch. The eggplant and shepherd's salads are fresh, the bread made in house and the meats grilled just right. The sauteed calf liver cubes are a house specialty. A few steps away at 1985 Coney Island Ave. is **Gulluoglu**, a bakery that is part of a well-known Turkish chain. The baklava has a deep pistachio flavor and savory pastries are perfect for breakfast the next day. In Sheepshead Bay, at 3075 Emmons Ave., **Halikarnas** draws from Turkey's relationship to the sea, offering all manner of expertly prepared fish, warm pillowy bread and terrific taramosalata, made from cured carp or cod roe.

RED HOOK

While the city has forced food vendors at the ball field to work out of trucks instead of open-air carts, and the weekend crowds tend much more toward Anglos than the Latin Americans families who congregate here for futbol, the pupusas and huaraches at Clinton St. and Bay St. are not to be missed. Get some elote (boiled corn slathered with cheese, mayonnaise, lime juice and spices) on the side and agua fresca to wash it down then for dessert head for **Steve's Authentic Key Lime Pies** at 204 Van Dyke St. Speaking of pies, not too far from Red Hook is **Four and Twenty Blackbirds** in Gowanus, which has a well-balanced lemon chess pie, while **Pies n' Thighs** at 166 South 4th St. Williamsburg has a summer-perfect sour cherry pie.

PROSPECT-LEFFERTS GARDENS

Similar to the proliferation of pizzerias with Ray in the name, there is a plethora of roti stops in Brooklyn paying homage to Ali. One is **Trinidad Ali Roti** on 589 Flatbush Ave. in Prospect-Lefferts Gardens. It has the requisite flaky wrapping holding toothsome goat, chicken and even a satisfying vegetable version for non-meat eaters. Others swear that **De Hot Pot** nearby at 1127 Washington Ave. is the place to go for a roti and doubles fix.

SUNSET PARK

Sunset Park is one of the premier ethnic food destinations in the whole city, dense with Vietnamese and Chinese restaurants on 7th and 8th Aves. Fifth Avenue is taco alley, with dozens of outposts vying for hungry crowds:

Ricos Tacos y Antojitos Mexicanos

Good, not great tacos, but Rico's well-constructed, killer tortas make it worth a detour.

505 51st St, near 5th Ave.

Piaxtla Es Mexico

One gastronomic accomplice says go here for excellent mole poblano and killer horchata.

505 51st St, near 5th Ave.

Las Conchitas Bakery

When the sweet tooth beckons, find the best pan mexicano and a full offering of freshly made Mexican pastries.

4811 5th Ave.

Xochimilco

Reasonably good tacos and horchata, but the draw is a unique sandwich, the Pambazo, which *Voice* critic Robert Sietsema describes as a spicy-potato sandwich drenched with so much chile sauce "your fingers will glow radioactive-red for a week."

4501 Fifth Ave., near 45th St.

Tacos Matamoras

This professional operation seems to defy the usual home-style aesthetic, but many consider it top dog for tacos in the area, even though consistency is a problem. The funkier options tend to be superior, such as cabeza (cow head meat).

4508 5th Ave., btwn. 45th & 46th St.

Tulcingo Restaurant & Bakery

The winner here is the arabes taco, which has a smoky, spicy lamb filling.

5520 5th Ave. btwn. 55th & 56th St.

Kai Feng Fu

The expertly prepared dumplings at this hole in a wall are only four for \$1, while the scallion pancakes are a crispy delight.

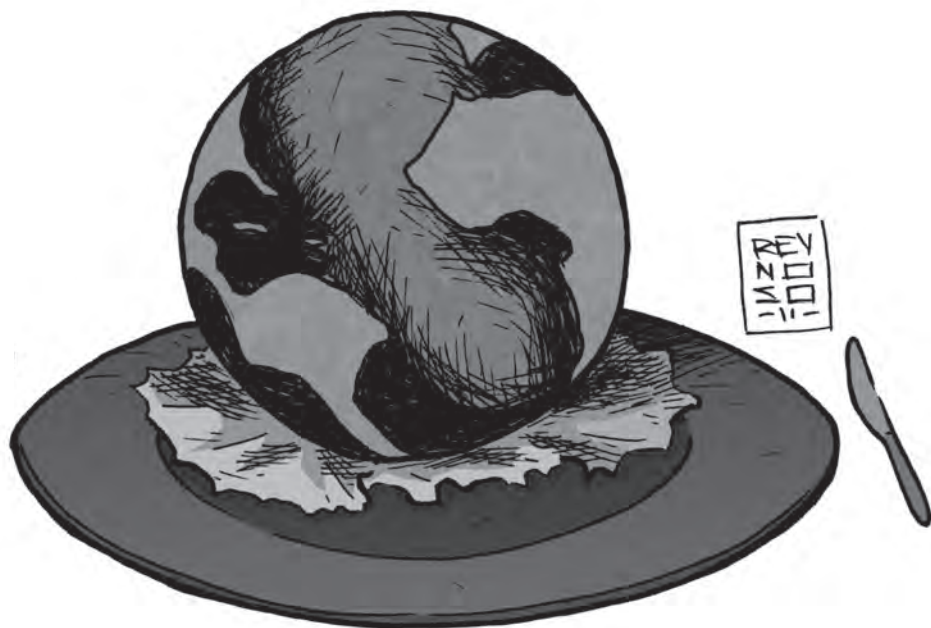
4801 8th Ave., btwn. 48th & 49th St.

LOWER EAST SIDE

Hit the **Doughnut Plant** at 379 Grand St., which still beats out worthy newcomers like **Dough** at 305 Franklin Ave. in Bed-Sty and old-timers like **Peter Pan Bakery** at 727 Manhattan Ave. in Greenpoint. **Shopsin's**, Stall No. 16, 120 Essex St. is known for its 900-item menu, including Slutty Cakes, and quirky food combinations and dining rules. **Russ & Daughters** at 179 E. Houston St. is another L.E.S. destination, rated as having the number one smoked salmon in town. Head south to the **Roasting Plant** at 81 Orchard St. for a superior cup of coffee and chocolate chip cookies that out-do even the famed Jacque Torres effort. A few blocks to the west, at 118 Eldridge St., is **Vanessa's Dumplings House**. She seems to feed half the neighborhood with her dirt-cheap and delicious dumplings, noodle soups and inventive scallion pancake sandwiches. Eldridge is a mecca for Fujianese hand-pulled noodles. Head to Chinatown to **Fay Da Bakery**, at 83 Mott St., for the amazing taro puffs and tasty scallion twists. Also close by is **Great NY Noodletown**, at 28 Bayard St., at the foot of the Manhattan Bridge, renowned for its succulent roast suckling pig, tender salt-baked seafood and superior soft-shell crabs. **Cong Ly** at 124 Hester St. has some of the best bun around, a light Vietnamese dish of noodles, vegetables, tangy dressing and meat or seafood of choice.

MIDTOWN & EAST VILLAGE

New York is overrun with sushi restaurants, and ramen is all the rage, but there is more to Japanese cuisine than that. **Katsu-Hama** at 11 E. 47th St. in Midtown serves perfect pucks of tonkatsu, breaded, fried pork cutlets that are juicy and deeply flavorful. While **Otafuku** on 236 E. 9th St. near 2nd Ave. specializes in rich, filling okonomiyaki, cabbage and egg pancakes with your choice of filling, and delicious takoyaki, octopus balls. Nearby at 29 3rd Ave., on the second floor, is **Sunrise Mart**, which stocks thousands of Japanese food products.



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UPPER MANHATTAN

At **Cachapas y Mas** in Northern Manhattan at 107B Dyckman St., choose from dozens of types of cachapas (stuffed corn cakes), burritos, arepas and sandwiches, including the patacón, where the bread is replaced by giant discs of fried, green plantains. **Caracas Arepas Bar** at 93 E. 7th St. in the East Village is considered to be largely responsible for the Arepas craze, the grilled, dry corn cakes that are a vehicle for various fillings. Try the Pabellón, which crams in beef, black beans, sweet plantains and salty cheese, but also get the empanadas, a pocket food you will want to take everywhere.

ASTORIA

When Egypt erupted in revolution in January, “Little Cairo” on Steinway Street in Astoria became the central spot for debate, solidarity protests and celebration. One of the top spots for Egyptian food is **Kabab Café** at 25-12 Steinway St. near 25th Ave., run by a gregarious leftist, Ali El Sayed. He holds court in his tiny, mismatched establishment, dishing out scrumptious lamb cheeks, a large vegetarian meze and goat chops drizzled with pomegranate molasses. A few doors down at **Mombar** at 25-22 Steinway St. Ali’s brother Moustafa concentrates on clay-pot cooking with equal deftness behind the stove.

Brittany-bred chef Phillipe Fallait honed his craft at Michelin-starred eateries, but at **Café Triskell**, located at 33-04 36th Ave., near 33rd St., he whips up superb café favorites ranging from great crepes and brilliant French toast to perfect French onion soup and duck breast.

CORONA

When **Tortilleria Nixtamal**, located at 104-05 47th Ave. between 104th and 108th Streets, opened in 2009, this Mexican-focused eatery was the only place in the city making masa from scratch. While various offerings were over-cooked on a recent visit, the tortillas will swear you off factory-produced varieties and can be purchased by the pound to go, along with delicious tamales.

Just a few blocks away from Tortilleria Nixtamal, **El Globo Restaurante** at 42-13 102 St. offers chapulines (grasshopper) and huitlacoche (corn smut) tacos. This isn’t some weird food dare. Grasshoppers are commonly eaten in Oaxaca and the chapulines taco is tasty and crunchy, while the huitlacoche has a pleasing fungal funk (and is prized by many chefs).

FLUSHING

Here is one of six different Chinatowns in town, more evidence why New York may be the most amazing food city in the world. It would take weeks to explore it all, but a few highlights include the delicate wontons in hot oil at **White Bear**, 135-02 Roosevelt Ave. #5; the \$1 Peking duck buns stall on Main St. and 40th Rd.; the addictive \$1 sticks of meat at **Xinjiang BBQ Cart**, 41st Ave. and Kissena Blvd.; top-notch soup dumplings at **Nan Xiang Xiao Long Bao**, 38-12 Prince St.; the cumin lamb burger and “hand-ripped” spicy lamb noodles at **Xi’an Famous Foods** and **Lanzhou’s** hand-pulled noodles — both locations are in the basement of Flushing Mall at 133-31 39th Ave.

Busking 101

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY
ERIKA EICHELBERGER

In late May, five people were arrested for dancing at the Jefferson Memorial in protest of an appeals court ruling upholding the prohibition of dancing at national monuments. Ironically, Jefferson’s fellow founding father Benjamin Franklin was a big fan of public performance, having been a street performer himself as a youngster, exercising what would later become First Amendment rights.

Art in public spaces is important, not only as political expression, but as an act in and of itself. It can be a reminder of our humanity as we walk down city streets engineered for commerce — a reminder that we are part of a community, not just consumers. Re-imagining the use of public space has the potential to ruffle feathers, but here in the city this summer, public performance is alive and (mostly) well. As temperatures rise and bank accounts run low, musicians and dancers are hitting the streets to try their luck busking — performing on the street for donations, a trade that has been practiced across the world since antiquity.

The word “busk” comes from the Spanish word *buscar*, to seek, as in for fame or fortune. Whether you’re seeking fortune, or just want to play, buskers veteran and rookie alike offer their advice on how to get started.



Morgan, who plays banjo at the Bedford Ave. L stop, says don’t fight the police: “When the cops tell you to move, move! Then you can come back later. Just don’t argue with them.” There is no law against playing in the subway, but buskers often report being

harassed anyway. Performers must simply follow the same rules of conduct as any other commuter — namely not blocking traffic and not using amplifiers.

Outside the MTA system, permits are only required if you are using an amplifier or are playing in or near a park.

Morgan plays gigs all over the city and uses busking to rehearse. “It’s nice to be able to play in front of people,” he says. “I play anywhere I can — parks, subways, bars, people’s houses. Everywhere.”

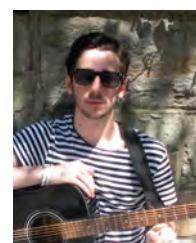
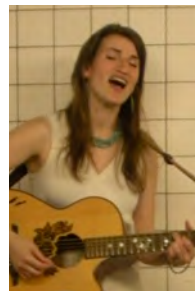
Jesse, a blues guitarist in a band called Deep Intent, recently started busking again because “times are hard — I am broke right now.”

He used to play on the street in the ’70s and ’80s, then played professionally while working as a chef until he got degenerative arthritis and went on disability.

He recommends the 7th Ave F/G train station in Park Slope because it’s an open space and the cops don’t bother him. “I’m not restricting or constricting the traffic. I’m out of the way but people can hear me,” he says.

Cora, a singer-songwriter, performs throughout the city, but has always wanted to try her hand at busking. *The Independent* spoke to Cora, performing in the 14th St. underground pathway, on her first day as a busker. She had already experimented with five different stations that night, and noted the importance of choosing stations with adequate time between trains. She says the Jay St./Metrotech station in downtown Brooklyn has five minutes of silent time “so that you can actually sing.”

Cora couldn’t find a job this summer, but hopes that she can use busking to scrape by and have more time to record her music.



Alex, a film student and writer, started playing the guitar and busking a year ago to overcome performance anxiety. “I had to beat that out of myself,” he says.

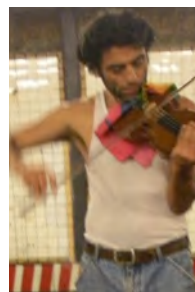
Alex recommends that new buskers learn lots of covers, “because people will just walk over to you and ask you to play something.” “Slip your own songs in there, too,” he says. “It’s nice because you get to field test them.” He was busking in Union Square to make toll money to visit his parents when *The Independent* spoke with him.

A man who simply goes by **C** says his favorite spot is the 14th St. underground pathway between the L train and the 1/2/3 trains because of the acoustics and heavy pedestrian traffic. C is a super and construction worker who busks whenever he is out of work. “This is what I love to do,” he says. “Been playing all my life.”

He also recommends the 7th Ave. stop on the B/Q line for its acoustics, and favors the West 4th St. stop in the West Village because “you get to meet people from all over the world.”

Luis, a Chilean violinist, makes an unheard of \$100-\$300 a day playing Bach on the Bedford Ave. L train platform. While he doesn’t know anyone else who makes that much (other buskers reported making around \$20 in a few hours), he says that training is key if you’re aiming to rake in that kind of money. “You really need a good solid technical base in order to play properly,” Luis says.

He started playing classical guitar at age 13, but says that when he first saw a violin it was “first sight love.” “It wasn’t like I was being unloyal to the guitar,” he jokes. “All I can say is that I’m glad the guitar wasn’t around, because I would have been in trouble.” Luis moved to the United States to continue training with his mentor, Joakin Bello.



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What the Indy is

HISTORY & POLITICS

The Memory Chalet
By TONY JUDT
PENGUIN PRESS, 2010

Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945
By TONY JUDT
PENGUIN PRESS, 2005

Last summer, noted European history professor Tony Judt succumbed to Lou Gehrig's disease and months later, Penguin Press released his memoirs *The Memory Chalet*. This book is short and packed with glances at the sweep of European history from the post-war economic boom in European rail investment, competing political ideologies and contemporary budget austerity. Judt's memoirs are unique because he documents his steady decline due to Lou Gehrig's disease while dictating the memoir. Judt begins the memoir with a description of the phases of his neurodegenerative disorder. "Next you begin to lose your voice...in that the diaphragm muscles can no longer pump sufficient air across your vocal cords...By this point you are almost certainly quadriplegic and condemned to long hours of silent immobility, whether or not in the presence of others." Allusions to Judt's greatest historical work, *Postwar*, are sprinkled throughout his memoirs. Judt's aim in *Postwar* was to integrate western, eastern and central Europe into a single narrative — a politically fraught work, though it's a surprisingly breezy read for such a dense book. Reading these two congruent, but different books is a good pairing whether you're a history buff or preparing for that summer trip to Europe.

North Star: A Memoir
By PETER CAMEJO
HAYMARKET BOOKS, 2010

Presidential election season is upon us like Christmas decorations during Halloween, and if you lost your illusions of change and hope — or missed Sarah Palin's Paul Revere motorcycle ride — read *North Star*. This book is '60s radical and Green Party candidate Peter Camejo's memoir. His life was the antithesis to consensus liberalism — he unsuccessfully challenged liberal lion Ted Kennedy for his senate seat; he was a rabble-rousing champion of immigrant rights (in then-Democratic Texas); and he was deeply involved in requisite left-wing battles and, of course, Green Party politics. Camejo ran as the Californian Green Party gubernatorial candidate three times and his strongest showing garnered 5.5 percent in 2002. He was also Ralph Nader's Vice Presidential running mate in 2004 and Camejo settles some scores with notables (such as Howard Zinn and Michael Moore) who urged Nader not to run, for fear of another Bush term. *North Star* takes some interesting turns — including Camejo's brother's stint in Mexican prison and other Latin American escapades. Readers who have no stake in left-wing party battles may skip some pages, but Camejo's life is that of a boomer who stayed true to '60s politics.

Babbitt

By SINCLAIR LEWIS
BANTAM CLASSICS, 1998

Written in 1922 by Sinclair Lewis, *Babbitt* now enjoys a quiet relevance as a critique on contemporary American society. At the heart of the novel is the middle-aged conformist George F. Babbitt who "made nothing in particular, neither butter nor shoes nor poetry, but he was nimble in the calling of selling houses for more than people could afford to pay." Sound familiar? Mr. Babbitt busies himself with climbing up the petite bourgeoisie social ladder, scolding his children and participating in excessive hometown boosterism. Babbitt's roaring tastes are mild: church attendance is important, lunch with friends at the social club is good and unions are a threat to society. The novel's tension comes when Babbitt falls down the social ladder and takes a moral inventory. Lewis also captures archaic Americanisms: "four-flushing old-back number," "Look here, young Dempsey," and "swell bunch of Lizzie boys."

—BENNETT BAUMER

TRAVEL & DEBT

Cambodian Grrl: Self-Publishing in Phnom Penh

By ANNE ELIZABETH MOORE
CANTANKEROUS TITLES, 2011

It's hard to pull off a moral third-world travelogue, but I'm hoping *Cambodian Grrl* succeeds. This series of essays by Anne Elizabeth Moore is culled from time the author spent working with young women and girls in Cambodia. Moore, an artist, writer, zinester and the editor of the departed *Punk Planet*, is known as a feminist and media activist and conducts plenty of tours and workshops to prove it. Teaching zine-making to young women in a country most recently remembered for the genocide of about two million citizens — and where women's rights are unheard of — can't be easy. Judging from the blog she kept while she was there (camblogdia.blogspot.com), Moore comes up against some tough questions, and the responses, in a blend of memoir and investigative reporting, will be illuminating and intensely personal in a way that is uniquely hers.

Debt: The First 5,000 Years
DAVID GRAEBER
MELVILLE, 2011

Also on my list for this summer is David Graeber's *Debt: The First 5,000 Years*. A renowned anthropologist who's studied anarchist communities (and was allegedly dismissed from Yale for being one), Graeber is one of the preeminent critics of our culture. Like all of my favorite academics, he walks the fine line between academia and readability, drawing from examples both far-flung and down the block. Here he counters the assertion that modern markets, which created the modern marvel of credit, replaced barter systems that were unsophisticated and cumbersome. He examines the centrality of debt to political debates across the ages, and shows how the infusion of debt-

Reading



influenced language into law and religion affects us even today. It may or may not show us the way forward from the current crisis, but at the very least, *Debt* promises to be a very bright mirror.

—IRINA IVANOVA

THEORY & FICTION

The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao
By JUNOT DIAZ
RIVERHEAD BOOKS, 2007

Twelve breaths per minute is average. Thirty breaths per minute is the average for readers of *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. Junot Diaz's book breaks the language barrier between English and Spanish, history and the unconscious. Driving the novel is the fall from grace, redemption and martyrdom of ghetto-nerd Oscar Wao. He is obese, brilliant and caught by the betrayals blowing through his family's many silences. In returning to Santo Domingo, Wao faces the post-colonial power that first destroyed them. What we are left with is a painful testimony that is "the harvest of Empire."

Introduction to Sociological Theory
By MICHELE DILLON
WILEY-BLACKWELL, 2010

We live in an invisible architecture of ideology. We don't have to see it to feel it. We don't have to talk about it to know it. Giving us vision is the work of *Introduction to Sociological Theory*; it is an uncommonly clear and effective college-level textbook. Spanning from Emile Durkheim to post-modern globalization, author-editor Michele Dillon crafts a grand-narrative of a discipline that takes sides. She urges for sociology to create "emancipatory knowledge" that frees us from the invisible ideas we are trapped within.

The Notebooks of Malte Lauride Brigge
By RAINER MARIA RILKE
VINTAGE INTERNATIONAL, 1910

What happens when your voice breaks apart? When the person who was supposed to receive you fades and your words float in the air like balloons? In *The Notebooks of Malte Lauride Brigge*, Rilke creates a semi-autobiography of expressionist anxiety. The protagonist is lost among faces that push air through language but never say anything

that reflects the reality around them. It is not a book for readers who need plot or narrative drive. It is a book for readers who can enjoy the lyrical confession of a soul in exile.

—NICHOLAS POWERS

POLITICS

Sovereign Acts
EDITED BY FRANCES NEGRON-MUNTANER
SOUTH END PRESS, 2010

Frances Negron-Muntaner is one resource I really regret letting pass by while in college. She is undoubtedly one of the more bad-ass academics making sure Columbia doesn't fall into total asinine brown-nosing. In this collection of fourteen essays, the authors question the concept of sovereignty in the framework of the nation-state and explore how sovereignty is utilized, revised and revolutionized in indigenous liberation struggles.

Let Us Now Praise Famous Men
By JAMES AGEE AND WALKER EVANS
MARINER BOOKS, 1989

Though I have never been to the South, I have read all of Faulkner's major novels and many of the minor ones, I sometimes cry during "The Night they Drove Old Dixie Down" and I often call people from New England "Yankees." I will join Agee and Evans in this somewhat romanticized southern sympathizing this summer as I travel for the first time to the South. I am looking forward to holding my own experiences up against the mystical poetic-journalism account of a fellow over-intellectualized dreamer.

The Art of Asking Your Boss for a Raise
By GEORGES PEREC
VERSO, 2011

The first English translation of this "lost classic" came out in March and now that I am rapidly approaching the chimera called the real world, I will have this guidebook through the absurd by my side. Perek is known for his experimental playfulness — he wrote the novel *La Disparition* without using the letter "e" — and this novel is based on an intricate flow-chart detailing the yes/no choices that govern office space dealings.

—LINDSEY CATHERINE CORNUM



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—A.D. Coleman, *Village Voice*

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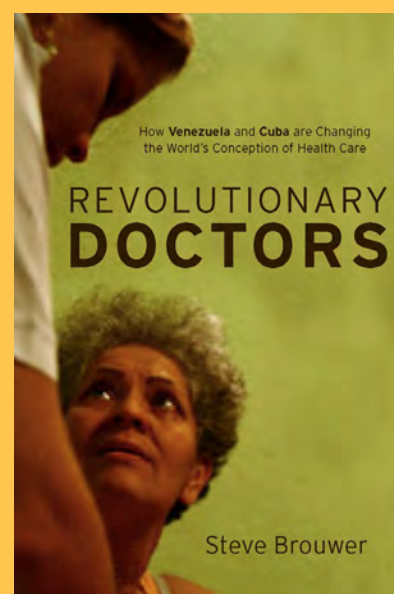
—Iris Morales, from the Introduction



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—Vicente Navarro, MD, PhD; professor of health policy, The Bloomberg School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins University; editor-in-chief, *International Journal of Health Services*

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TALK: FUCKIN' (A)'S HOT, HOTTTT, HOTTTTTTTT SUMMER SERIES. Workshop two: G & P Spots.

Dancing to Revolution



BY TIM DOODY

What's a free spirit to do these days now that the public spaces of New York City have been sliced, diced and overly-regulated, specifically to discourage or even intimidate large numbers of us from coming together, spontaneously or otherwise?

You can no longer process through the city with 50 people or hang in a park with 30 — unless you obtain prior permission from the police. And don't get me started on the park curfews that displace neurotics, poets and lovers from their traditional nocturnal haunts.

To make matters worse, city officials have reconfigured downtown counter-cultural hives to minimize swarms. They partitioned Tompkins Square Park into crowd-proof corridors and transformed the West Side piers from a fairly autonomous drop-in center for queer refugees to a heavily policed thoroughfare. In Washington Square Park, they just tore down the circular, tree-shrouded seating areas where musicians, dancers and agitators had gathered and replaced them with skinny, backless benches.

While numerous tactics can be used to reopen our public space, along with our public imagination, I'd like us to consider one in particular: the Spiral Dance.

The Spiral Dance is an archaic technology that implements body movement, song and intimacy to reorient participants to each other and their surroundings, to elongate their alpha brainwaves and awaken them to the pleasures of here and now. The Spiral Dance is ritual magick that can be practiced where it may be needed most: right here, in the capital of capitalism.

To initiate the Spiral Dance, you'll need a witch. Preferably one who accessorizes her Whitmanesque beard with ruby-crusted stiletto heels. It can only help if your witch sings with a resonate baritone and rioted at Stonewall back in the day, because she will know firsthand that old paradigms can be cracked open and new ones nurtured when people come together en masse.

Encourage your witch to call participants into a circle, or something approximating a circle. With advanced planning — or smart timing — your circle should quickly swell beyond the 30- and 50-person rules and demonstrate the collective exhilaration that these rules prohibit.

Your witch ought to clasp hands with those on her left and right, and signal for others to do the same. Participants may now resemble the inhabitants of Dr. Seuss's Whoville — if the Grinch had spiked their Christmas punch with acid.

Your witch, if she's any good, knows what to do next. She should release the hand of the person on her right and step into the inside of the circle, so that she begins to trace a smaller concentric circle within it. She may swish, sashay or otherwise stylize her movement. Because she is connected to her left by a daisy chain of clasped hands, the entire outer circle eventually spins. Your witch may feel called to complete the smaller

circle, or she may pivot sharply 180 degrees at a given point, so that she moves in close proximity to, but the opposite direction of, those who follow.

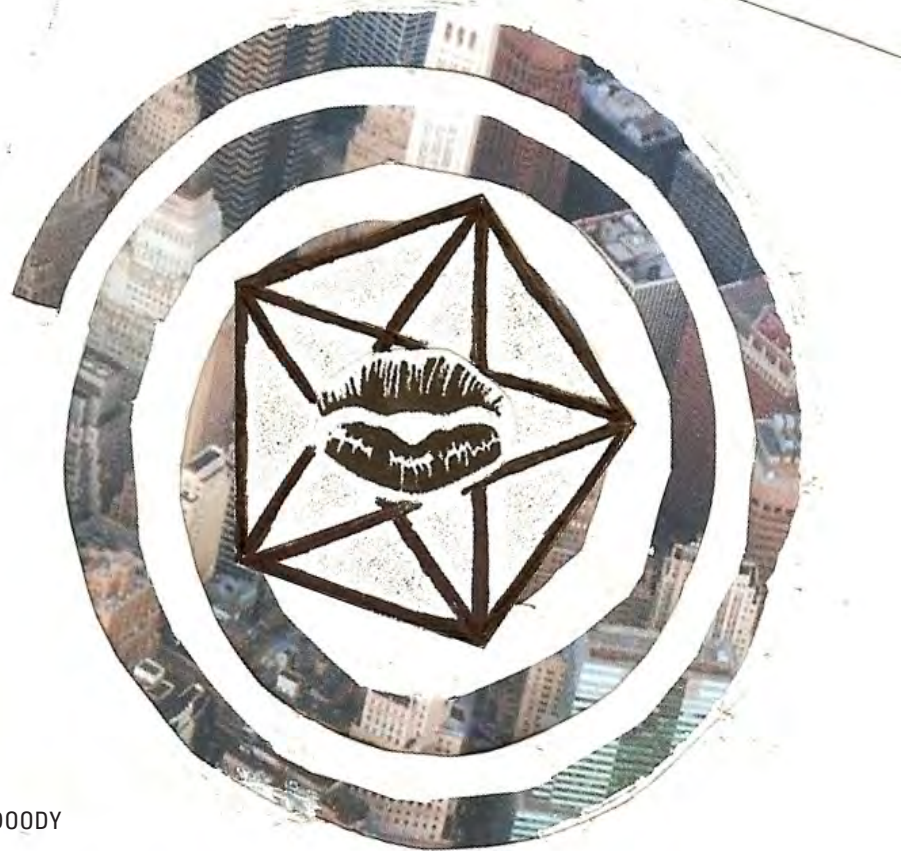
Rather quickly, spiral dancers will form a configuration that resembles a Celtic labyrinth or the small intestine. But because they're both the objects moving through these corridors as well as the corridors themselves, they are even more dynamic — perhaps they are a supercell.

Until now, for purposes of clarifying movement patterns, I've omitted some basics. Prior to spiraling, it's essential for your witch to teach participants a topical and easily remembered song of no more than four lines. Drummers should augment this song with seductive rhythms. The rationale is sound: repetitive beats and vocal chords massage vital organs and expand conscious-

the lines of police.

However, often enough, it's advantageous to wind down the spiral. Five months after 9/11, the World Economic Forum came to town to push its neoliberal agenda under the guise of altruism. Hundreds of witches, dreamers and agitators determined that New York was in need of magick, and so, during a week of sometimes-raucous street activity, we spiraled together in the main hall of Grand Central Station. Twenty minutes later, countless riot cops had taken up positions around us, lining the balconies. We slowed our drums and feet, and then sat. The snap-crackle-pop of police radios was the only sound — until a witch began to sing “Amazing Grace.” A chorus joined her, and then two dancers successfully negotiated our exit.

If you've read this far and determined that



TIM DOODY

ness.

Spiral Dances are most enjoyable when part of a series of activities — say, a roving street party or the anti-summit that often coalesces around a trade ministerial. It should come as no surprise that, when spiraling in today's world, you may find yourself surrounded by heavily armored cops. You and your witch must then recognize that a much larger dance is occurring — one which necessitates a higher order of spell-casting.

On such occasions, it is sometimes appropriate to escalate both volume and pacing. During this year's Drag March, a quickened spiral was the first of several factors that led to an all-night takeover of Christopher Street. Just after we'd begun to dance, police ordered us to disperse. But the spell had already been cast. Revelers were linked together in a tropical storm that swirled around the street, the sidewalks and even

the Spiral Dance just isn't your thing, that's okay. And besides, you don't have to be a gender-bent witch to know that magick is being strangled out of New York's streets, plazas and parks.

However, I do hope you recognize that, for millennia, we've manifested collective dreams through the ritual use of voice, drum, body movement, divine costumes, site alterations and sacramental offerings. And now, thanks to our lineage of visionaries, we have no shortage of augmentations to this ancient palette, including glitter and mobile hammocks. My fervent wish is that you will utilize these tools, as often as possible, to transform street corners into sacred turf and spectators into spell-casters.

Tim Doody's writing has appeared in The New York Times and The Brooklyn Rail. For more of his work, visit timdoody.me.

The Plight of the Honeybee

Queen of the Sun
DIRECTED BY TAGGART SIEGEL
DISTRIBUTED BY COLLECTIVE EYE, INC.

About four years ago the world started noticing that bees were disappearing in large numbers. In the United States, Europe, Australia and New Zealand, beehives were being left empty with no explanation. While bee stocks have been on a global decline since the mid-1970s, this rate of disappearance — between 30 and 70 percent was unprecedented and frightening. The phenomenon, which now has a name — colony collapse disorder (CCD) — is described in Taggart Siegel’s documentary *Queen of the Sun*. It’s a lush, gorgeous film, a tender love letter to the honeybee. But while it names CCD as the symptom of a larger problem facing honeybees, and touch-

chime in with their thoughts on global agriculture and food systems.) The documentary’s strengths are largely visual. Through interviewing many beekeepers — some professional, some hobbyists — we’re treated to a dazzling montage of hives, honeycomb, flowers and affectionately buzzing bugs. The film is an important introduction to the human-bee relationship, which is about 10,000 years old. While it provides some historical context (the ancient Egyptians revered honeybees, and until the 19th century selling honey was illegal in many places), it does so through the words of the scientists and beekeepers, and their love for and dependence on these creatures shine through. In addition to the charismatic honeybees that are the film’s focus, there are about 20,000 other species of bees in the world



es on its many man-made causes, it left me no more optimistic about our means to save the bees than I’d been before seeing the film. Bees are unusual among insects by being, as one Italian farmer describes them in the film, warm and fuzzy — even seductive. While in ecological terms, the broad disappearance of insects is an indicator of environmental damage and a warning of trouble farther up the food chain, it doesn’t reach the same alarm in the popular food chain as, say, the plight of the endearing polar bears or pandas. (Various sectors of the environmental movement have been criticized for pandering to popular preference for large and easily lovable mammals and birds.) Nonetheless, dire concern over the bees’ disappearance is justified precisely because they’re so crucial to human existence. The food writer Michael Pollan estimates in the film that 40 percent of all the food we eat depends on bees for reproduction. (Raj Patel, Vandana Shiva and Gunther Hauk also

who are equally crucial to plant pollination, and some of them are in danger as well. The predictable villains of modern agriculture all make an appearance — genetically modified crops, whose genes make their way into the honeybees and their honey; monoculture, which is impossible to pollinate naturally; and pesticides, all of which a few years ago depleted the United States’ stock of bees to the point that, in 2005, we started importing bees from Australia. Despite these numerous threats to bees — and by extension humans, and despite the many unexplained and poorly understood causes of the bees’ disappearance, *Queen of the Sun* avoids the gloom-and-doom so prevalent in documentaries. It opts instead to reveal a magical ecosystem that straddles the natural and commercial world, betting that once we see what we’re endangering, we’ll fight hard to save it. Here’s hoping they’re right.

—IRINA IVANOVA

Wayne Foster and his friends were fed up. So they started Benny's Resistance Army and joined the burger flippin' revolution!

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